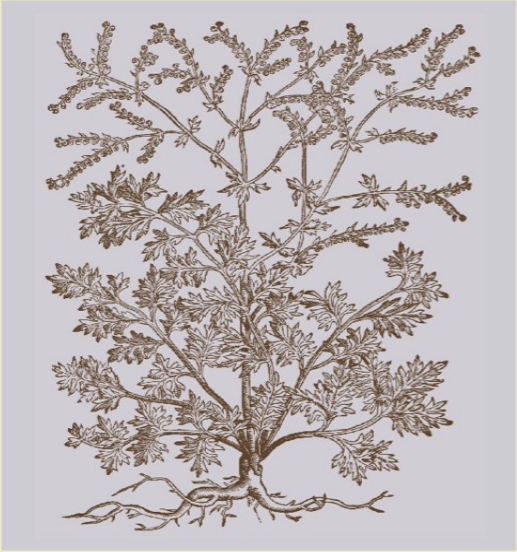
THE Earthwise HERBAL

VOLUME I

A Complete Guide to Old World Medicinal Plants



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Other books by Matthew Wood

The Book of Herbal Wisdom: Using Plants as Medicines

The Earthwise Herbal: A Complete Guide to New World Medicinal Plants

The Practice of Traditional Western Herbalism:
Basic Doctrine, Energetics, and Classification

Seven Herbs: Plants as Teachers

Vitalism: The History of Herbalism, Homeopathy, and Flower Essences

THE Earthwise HERBAL

A Complete Guide to Old World Medicinal Plants

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North Atlantic Books
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INTRODUCTION

For long years I have examined and experimented, dried and cut up, boiled and tasted. There is not one little herb, or powder, which I have not myself tried and found good.

—FATHER SEBASTIAN KNEIPP (1898, 149)

The Earthwise Herbal has been written to assist the serious student and practitioner of Western herbal medicine. In addition, it provides a useful "cookbook" for the home doctor or hobbyist herbalist. The title refers to the fact that the Earth and the herbs possess their own innate wisdom, and that we can learn from natural processes and plants a safe and effective practice of medicine, rather than imposing upon them the artificial structure of modern science and medicine. Herbal knowledge is best developed through the earthiness of direct personal experience, with the use of logic and intuition to assess and understand herbal properties and medical conditions.

The selection of medicinal herbs was originally based on "tradition only, with shrewd guesses, and close observations," as Dr. W. T. Fernie (1914, 8) wrote. Or, as Nicholas Culpeper (1653) would say, Dr. Tradition, Dr. Reason, and Dr. Experience. These are the foundations *The Earthwise Herbal* particularly cherishes and attempts to build upon. Modern knowledge is not ignored or trivialized, but the latter has in recent times been pushed with great zeal, at the expense of tradition, shrewdness, and observation, and it is time that we begin to value experiential and traditional wisdom.

The Earthwise Herbal is the product of more than twenty-five years of active practice by the author. It is founded upon personal experience in tens of thousands of cases—a lifetime portfolio that *few* of the biomedical chemists and researchers introducing plant products into the marketplace can claim. Building upon personal

experience is followed by comparison of notes with other busy practitioners, careful reading of herbal literature *in the light of personal experience,* and direct education from Mother Earth and the herbs. Dr. Tradition—whom Culpeper distrusted yet utilized—has been checked against experience, natural history, and reasonable consideration for pharmacological knowledge.

In contrast, biomedicine accepts the testimony of pharmacologists, professional writers, and researchers who have never actually used herbs, much less the ones they are researching. This leads to grandiose mistakes and misrepresentations. For instance, more than $165 million of echinacea is sold each year to people who have been taught by advertising that it will strengthen their immune system and help prevent colds and acute diseases. This application is based on speculations by pharmacologists about the activity of constituents of the plant that are immunologically active. However, there is no basis in tradition that echinacea was ever used to head off colds or acute diseases. Indeed, it was always used for sepsis, rattlesnake bite, and profound tissue poisoning. This has nothing to do with head colds. Thus it should not surprise us that in 2005 an exhaustive study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded that echinacea had no clinically significant effect on rhinovirus infections (Turner et al., 2005).

The use of completely unfounded and false information has often replaced traditional herbal knowledge. This has often occurred with the zealous help of so-called “herbalists.” Armchair herbal theorists and marketers have frequently jumped on the bandwagon of pseudo-science because it made herbalism sound more authoritative. They aped scientific researchers, who believed that no clinical experience with herbs is necessary in order to be an expert. By sacrificing knowledge founded upon real experience they sadly have helped to destroy the profession they think they support. Reliance on pseudo-science, instead of authentic knowledge, has led to a warping of herbalism, where untested speculation is represented as fact, and tested, empirical knowledge known to many cultures for hundreds of years is ignored. Today one can find websites that mock the American Indians for using echinacea for snake bite, as if they

were children lost in the woods, who needed science to tell them how to survive.

There is a correct way to undertake research: align it with experience and tradition. An example of this approach is research undertaken on elder *(Sambucus nigra)*. This small tree has long been used in European folk medicine for fevers, influenza, colds, and respiratory conditions. A number of constituents (cyanogenic glucosides, flavonoids, cytokinins) suggest antifebrile and antiviral properties (Hoffmann, 2003). A 1995 study of Sambucol (a standardized elderberry extract) showed positive results in inhibiting the growth of ten different strains of influenza virus. Clinical trials demonstrated that it lessened the length of recuperation and discomfort from influenza. A significant improvement of the symptoms, including fever, was seen in 93.3% of the cases in the group treated with Sambucol within two days, whereas in the control group 91.7% of the patients showed an improvement within six days ($p < 0.001$) (Zakay-Rones et al., 1995, 361).

References to pharmacological constituents are included in this book, although I have not attempted to make this a treatise on the pharmacological basis of plant uses. For that the reader may turn to David Hoffmann's *Medical Herbalism* (2003).

Herbalism and Holism

I have called this herbal "earthwise" to contrast it to other herbals reflecting the pharmacological approach. It is based on sources that the scientific approach ignores: historical uses, folk medicine, folk practitioners, the experience of actual herbalists, intuitive concepts of energy, plant properties, and medicine, daydreams, and dreams. It is, however, "scientific" in a broader sense of the word because it follows an organized and reasonably critical approach to understanding plant medicine. *The Earthwise Herbal* is organized around the concept that each plant has an innate intelligence or core "essence," as the ancients would have said, binding together

the disparate properties and uses into a meaningful and logical or intuitive whole. The compounds in the plant, its appearance, growth habit, ecological niche, and medicinal properties are united by this common personality, intelligence, or essence. This knowledge not only represents the "inwardness" of the thing—as the Quakers would say—but it represents the whole that unites the parts. This approach is thus set upon a holistic foundation.

Because the emphasis is placed on the inwardness of the herb, *The Earthwise Herbal* is more expressly concerned with the use of individual herbs. It describes the properties of individual herbs and does not address their interaction or formulation. It is not written in opposition to formula-making, but in an attempt to help clarify and describe the properties of individual plants.

In ancient times single herbs were known as "simples," in contrast to combinations, or "compounds." Those who used single herbs were called "simplers." In general, they were less educated than the college physicians who developed extensive doctrines or systems, classified herbs according to properties (first with energetic systems and later with pharmacology), and used complex preparations (at first compounds, later pharmaceutical products). This herbal follows the approach of the simplers, not only in their use of individual herbs, but in their methods for determining the properties of herbs. As Dr. W. T. Fernie (1914, 1) explains:

> These primitive Simplers were guided in their choice of Herbs partly by watching animals who sought them out for self-cure, and partly by discovering for themselves the sensible properties of the plants as revealed by their odor and taste; also by their supposed resemblance to those diseases which nature meant them to heal.

The simplers have been laughed at because of their use of the "doctrine of signatures" (the plant looks like the disease or organ), but there is a great deal of shrewdness in the observations of Nature made by people who live close to the natural world. Mother Nature is very efficient: plants are streamlined representatives of the forces

that have formed them. No shape, color, or pattern is accidental. Form *is* related to function.

I have also attempted to build a knowledge of plant properties based on the scholarly tradition. This started with energetic systems —that is, analysis of plants and diseases by hot or cold, damp or dry, yin or yang, or four or five elements, and so on. These analytical approaches, suited to the intuition, can help to describe herbal properties. Simple pharmacological information has also been included. The knowledge of plant constituents is often helpful in recognizing their potential properties. Taste and odor, referred to by Father Kneipp and Dr. Fernie, are very closely related to energetics and pharmacology.

Plants are much older than we are. They have survived ruthless natural selection and have been honed by millennia of threat and stress to become the individuals that they are. Although not intelligent in the sense that we are, every molecule of the plant is held together by a common purpose—survival—and if we can understand the core essence that binds the whole together we can understand what the plant will do for us as a medicine.

This organizing principle has been chosen, not just for philosophical reasons, but as the best means for providing precise, practical, reliable guidelines for the selection of appropriate medicinal plants. The greatest effort has been made to make the basic logic of the plant's medicinal properties evident to the reader. This portrait of the core nature of the plant is accompanied by specific indications—that is, symptoms that are descriptive and detailed—rather than general disease names or vague, poorly described symptoms. All of this is intended to help the practitioner pinpoint a precise medicinal plant, suited to a precise pathological condition.

Nicholas Culpeper, progenitor of English-language herbalism.

This approach to herbalism is holistic because it is founded upon a knowledge of the whole plant. However, if we are going to describe plants in a holistic fashion, we are also going to have to discuss medical knowledge and pathology from the same standpoint. This requires an entire revisioning of medical concepts and vocabulary. “What did you do when you wrote about physiology?” asked my friend Stephen Harrod Buhner, “Tear it down to its component parts and start over from scratch?” Yes, exactly. Instead of attempting to place herbs within the prevailing constructs of conventional biomedicine, I have described medicine in a compatible, holistic fashion. Instead of organizing medical knowledge around the tiniest parts (the molecules), I begin with the whole (person, plant, disease), the wholes within the wholes (tissue states, organ systems, physiological functions), and proceed to the pieces (symptoms, more often than molecular compounds).

Virtually every description of every plant in this book, if it contains any detail at all, is founded upon a concept of medicine at odds with modern biomedicine, but largely compatible with the

methodology of traditional medicine and folk practice, whether it be Greek, European, American Indian, Chinese, or Ayurvedic. In short, I describe physiological processes—the natural history of the disease—rather than specific molecular lesions.

It is not enough to talk about holism; our writing style and concepts must be forged from holistic substance. The greatest effort has been made to write an herbal that is easy for the reader to understand in a descriptive and intuitive fashion, rather than to secure brownie points from establishment scientific standards that are hard for laypeople to follow and counter-intuitive in the clinical setting.

Herbs are slurries of organic chemicals that act on multiple pathways simultaneously to effect general physiological changes. They are not purified molecules (like drugs) that act on single molecular bonding sites. Thus, they are suited to general physiological changes, rather than specific molecular lesions. However, a plant is not just a slurry of chemicals; it is directed by an innate intelligence, just as we are not slurries of chemicals. Even allergies and viral infections, though they may originate in very complex single molecules and produce characteristic molecular lesions, present a "slurry" of symptoms that also need to be seen as having a holistic identity. To be effective, natural, and earthwise, all elements of our medicine must be founded in the holistic paradigm.

Because of the length of the subject, *The Earthwise Herbal* has been divided into two volumes, one covering Old World plants used in the pharmacopoeia of Western herbalism, and the other chronicling medicine plants of the New World. The plants discussed are mostly those found in traditional literature or adopted recently into modern herbal practice.

Reductionism and Holism

The holistic perspective begins with the observation that the "sum is greater than the parts." Thus, the whole organism acts with an intelligence and direction that govern the parts. Yet there are also

wholes within the wholes. Thus, within the organism there are systems and organs that govern the disparate parts and functions with a greater purpose, but which are themselves controlled by a more comprehensive whole. Holistic practitioners have found that the intelligence of the whole, and of the parts within it, are arranged hierarchically, so that core functions are directed and protected more tightly than peripheral parts. For instance, in starvation the muscles and viscera waste, but the nervous system does not. Thus, in holism we attempt to understand the whole organism, the governing systems within the whole, the parts within the whole, and the hierarchical expression of government throughout the organism. In this setting we locate disease, attempting to understand its distribution, extent, limitations, and depth of penetration within the organism. We also attempt to understand the medicinal plants in an analogous fashion: the organ-affinities, depths, and patterns to which they are remedial.

Conventional science and biomedicine, by comparison, are based upon *reductionism*. This emphasizes the smallest functional parts of the organism, the molecules. Thus, disease is defined in terms of chemical and molecular changes in isolated, local tissues, and treatment is by purified molecular substances—drugs. A biomedical textbook (Wyngaarden and Smith, 1985, 5) defines reductionism as the exploration

> of details, and the details of details, until all the smallest bits of the structure, or the smallest parts of the mechanism are exposed to scrutiny.… Instead of reaching for the whole truth, the scientist examines small, defined, and clearly separable phenomena.

The author of the above passage seems to have some dim understanding of his peril, for he speaks of the “whole truth” in opposition to his own pursuits. It would be nice to think that holism is founded on the “whole truth,” as the above quotation implies. However, that would be granting too much. Holism is founded on the struggle for the whole truth. Just as with reductionism, it is

limited by individual perception and interpretation. Reductionism mistrusts the subjectivity of personal "truth," trusting instead to common, demonstrable "truth." Holism, on the other hand, views the so-called "objective" view of reductionism not as a kind of truth, but as a kind of artificial knowledge, removed from direct, spontaneous human experience of Nature (and Spirit) in its unregulated, free-flowing expression.

The acceptance of the value of subjectivity lays in the very nature of holism. In valuing the whole person it includes the subjective and the objective. That makes it intrinsically health-giving. Holism sides with the better side of the human spirit, which struggles for wholeness and understanding.

It is upon the imperfect perception of the individual that holism attempts to build a worldview on which many can agree. This worldview is often not provable by experimentation. However, it can be experienced as a workable model supporting both practical work in the world and the intuitive wholeness that gives meaning to life.

Working models are already used to achieve practical results in many departments of human society including agriculture, politics, war, diplomacy, and jurisprudence. These are examples of only some of the fields that rely more heavily on experience and intuition than is allowed within the more narrowly defined limits of science and medicine. No one in their right mind would fight a war using an FDA-like bureaucracy to guide the soldiers in the field, yet the almost equally life-and-death practice of medicine is hamstrung by layers and layers of scientific, political, and legal red-tape. Is it moral that medical practice should be limited to that which is proven by multimillion dollar trials when there are cures and palliatives in the world that have been empirically proven? As one herbalist wrote (Donald Law, 1973, 104),

> I find it ungrateful to spend many millions of pounds on "research" (which money could alleviate poverty and suffering) when we deliberately ignore remedies which are all around us if we will only open our hearts, believe and trust.

Holism can accomplish results by relying upon individualized subjective perceptions because most of life is a scientifically unproven landscape that people maneuver by instinct. When the individual is encouraged in the use of his or her subjective faculties, they grow more certain and confident. Thus, reductionism accumulates *data* while holism encourages the accumulation of *knowledge* or *wisdom*.

Reductionism is bound by its own limitations. It only perceives the parts, not how they function or fit together. It does not attempt to study the natural world as it is, but little fragments isolated in laboratories and subjected to controlled manipulation. It is, therefore, artificial by nature. Holism, on the other hand, attempts to understand Nature as a whole, each organism as a whole, and the parts within them as whole functional units. Its approach is Nature-based and Earth-wise.

In contrast to the above definition by Wyngaarden and Smith, I would set the following quotation to illustrate the nature of holistic thought. It comes from one of the earliest authors in our tradition. In the *Timaeus*, Plato gave a perfect illustration of the holistic perspective on disease (Cornford, 1957, 351):

> Disorders should not be irritated by drugs, save where there is grave danger. For in general any disease has a settled constitution somewhat like that of living creatures. The composition of the living creature is so ordered as to have a regular period of life for the species in general; and also each individual.… It is the same with the constitution of diseases; if this be deranged by drugs to the disregard of their destined period, it often results that slight maladies become grave or their number is increased. Hence, so far as leisure permits, one should manage and control all complaints by regimen, instead of irritating a stubborn mischief by drugs.

In holistic medicine we seek to find the root of the sickness. Our interest is not in the name of the organism “causing” the illness, the isolated molecular lesion that defines it, or the name of the disease

appearing in a medical textbook. We want to understand the whole process and nature of the disease. We want to understand its natural history—how it starts, maintains itself, and changes. All of this is unified by a "personality" or entity-like behavior that unites its diverse expressions, progressions, and changes into a whole.

The entity or personality of a disease is not identical to the disease organism, because the latter manifests different expressions of disease in different people. In holistic medicine we attempt to comprehend the whole expression or "constitution" of the sickness in the individual. Only when our understanding encompasses the whole are we in a position to eliminate the disturbance radically—from its root—through lifestyle changes, diet, and medication. And these must be suited to the individual.

Our medicinal agent, in order to cure, must encompass the whole process and nature of the sickness, and in order to do so, it must itself be holistic in nature. Such is the medicine plant, for the plant is a whole entity that has mastered threats and stress in the natural world. The collection of medicinal constituents that occur within its little green body represents a comprehensive, intelligent, integrated response to stress and this same slurry of chemicals, with its corresponding intelligence, is suited to the treatment of an analogous process of disease manifesting in the individual. Angelica, for instance, has learned how to survive in cold, damp environments and it can correct problems in the organism due to cold, damp stressors in the animal environment.

One of the first lessons of holistic practice is that the patho-physiology of modern biomedicine is not suited to work with medicinal plants. Disease classification in biomedicine is often based on precise molecular lesions that are the end product of broad pathological processes rather than their origin. Drugs are refined molecules directed toward these lesions; they are not suited to the treatment of broad pathological processes. Biomedical patho-physiology and treatments are suited to a reductionist view of the organism, in which emphasis is placed on the parts rather than the whole.

The medicinal plant, unlike the drug, constitutes such a "whole organism." The unique slurry of chemicals constitutes is the material expression, so to speak, of an intelligent being that has learned to survive in a challenging niche in the natural environment. It has been "standardized" by Nature, and hardly needs to be tweaked by nosy human beings who think Nature is insufficient to the challenge.

This slurry of chemicals is not suited to the treatment of a molecular lesion or a disease name. Rather, it is suited to the same kind of evolutionary stresses and strains that have created this particular chemistry. That would be wind, water, drought, sunlight in excess or deficiency, or many such factors in combination with each other, or succeeding one another in complex patterns. Such environmental buffeting is analogous to the stresses and strains that the sick person has been subjected to and thus the correct medicinal herb becomes the specific antidote to corresponding patterns of stress.

Different Kinds of Holism

When holistic medicine emerged in the 1970s it was associated with the "whole person." For many alternative physicians (there was no "complementary" in those rough days) treating the whole person meant establishing the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual context of the disorder. Now, in the days of "integrated" medicine, this perspective has to some extent been incorporated into modern biomedicine. The conventional doctor can refer a patient to a psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker. A person's spirituality is treated with respect by medicine—as long as they aren't trying to convert people in the clinic. Thus, it is tempting to say that many of the aspirations of holistic physicians in the '70s and '80s have been realized in modern biomedicine. However, there are different visions of holism, and there is one important area that has barely been acknowledged outside alternative medicine.

In traditional medicine it is customary to visualize the whole person, plant, or disease in terms of *pattern* or *constitution*. This definition is inherent in the quotation from Plato above, where the disease is said to have a constitution like a "living creature." The original Greek for "living creature" *(zoa)* conveys this meaning much more strongly, since the term not only means "animal" but has an inference like "symbol," descending probably from the ancient use of animals as totems. One finds this method of describing people, plants, and diseases, in terms of animal types, in American Indian medicine (Garrett, 2003). More generally, however, ancient and traditional systems of medicine generated terms to describe patterns and constitutions that were independent of animals. In traditional Chinese medicine we have yin and yang, and the five elements (wind, fire, earth, water, metal). In Ayurvedic medicine we have the three *doshas (vata, pitta, kapha)* and the five elements. In Greek medicine we have the four elements (fire, air, water, earth), the four humors, the four temperaments, and the four qualities (hot, cold, damp, dry). In homeopathy the remedies are the constitutions.

Although some forms of traditional medicine such as acupuncture have worked their way into conventional medicine, and many of the concepts of holism have been incorporated into medical practice itself, the use of pattern-based or constitutional thinking has been almost universally ignored in biomedical circles. "We don't think that way," said one physiologist to another who had dared to cross that divide. By comparison, in alternative medicine (for here it is truly still alternative and not accepted enough to be "complementary"), this method of analysis is almost universal.

Energetics

The word energetics has been adopted in modern alternative medicine to represent the idea that energy forms into patterns. Holistic medicine recognizes not only the existence of life energy but also the patterns of expression it takes on in realms both

psychological and physiological. The concept of energetics infers some higher, metaphysical organizing power. Thus, it is rejected when other elements of holism are adopted into mainstream medicine. It often seems, at the present time, that the use of the word energetic marks the boundary line between medicine that is still really "alternative" and medicine that is "complementary" or "integrated."

When it abandoned constitution, medicine lost its soul because it abandoned real personhood, replacing it with the average respondent in statistical studies. Average respondents don't have individual traits—or constitutions. They exist only in abstraction.

The term energetic also relates in some measure to the older concept of humoralism. This concept was, however, not deemed acceptable by contemporary practitioners because the concept of "humors" has pretty much dried up in modern speech. Today little emphasis is placed on purging or tonifying humors. Instead, people think in terms of "unblocking *qi*" or stuck energy. People tend to think of the basic life force or vital force of the body as an energy rather than a humoral substance.

The premise of energetics is necessary in order to see the plant and the disease as a whole and natural process. It is necessary in order to establish medical practice on a truly holistic perspective. This element of holism has not been recognized or adopted into conventional medicine, but has remained a part of the alternative medical universe. Thus, *The Earthwise Herbal* is not a representation of complementary or integrated medicine; it is still alternative.

PART I

The Practice of Traditional Herbal Medicine

CHAPTER ONE
Energetics of Traditional Medicine

Herbs, plants, and other medicine manifestly operate, either by heat, coldness, dryness, or moisture, for the world being composed of so many qualities, they and only they can be found in the world, and the mixtures of them one with another.

—NICHOLAS CULPEPER (1653, 376)

In *The Earthwise Herbal* I have used a variety of different systems and ideas to describe the properties (and energetics) of medicinal plants. Because this is a Western herbal, I have largely used Western systems—the four qualities of Greek medicine (hot, cold, damp, dry) and the six tissue states of physiomedicalism (nineteenth-century American botanical medicine). In addition, I have used other Western and Eastern approaches. In this chapter we will examine the most commonly used energetic systems of the Old World: Greek, Ayurvedic, and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). In addition we will discuss the alchemical perspective, which follows a somewhat different approach to energetics. In my subsequent volume on plants of the New World used in Western herbal medicine I will discuss the energetics of American Indian medicine and nineteenth-century North American botanical medicine in greater detail.

Greek Medicine

It is generally held that Greek medicine arose in the fifth century BCE, when the original doctrines were laid down by Empedocles,

Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, and the "Hippocratic school." However, it was not until the third century CE, during the Roman period, that a Greek, Galen of Pergamum, pulled the entire mass together into a comprehensive system. Greek medicine, so called, actually reached its peak during the Middle Ages. Ibn Sina brought it to its peak of internal logic, following the Aristotelian model.

By the late medieval period Greek science and medicine were becoming increasingly rigid and theoretical. In 1527 Paracelsus threw the *Canon of Avicenna* into a bonfire in Basle to mark his disdain for the classical system. He introduced a new method that gave birth, on the one hand, to modern chemistry, pharmacology, and physiology, and on the other to "alchemical medicine," described later in this chapter.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The Greek philosopher-scientists opined about various numbers and kinds of elements until Empedocles arrived at four, consisting of ***earth, water, air***, and ***fire***. A generation before Socrates, Empedocles attempted to explain the operations of the body in terms of the four elements. He was dismissed as a "theorist," by one of the Hippocratic writers, who thought it was speculative to attempt to understand anything about the inner workings of the body. Although it is true that many of the Greek philosophers were theorists, Empedocles was more of an archaic throwback to shamanism. His use of the four elements suggests magical roots more than philosophical ones.

Empedocles considered the duty of a healer to include both medicine and weather-making. This may explain why he gravitated to the concept of four elements. For Empedocles there had to be four directions or winds and these would naturally have suggested four elements in the Earth and the human body.

Modern scientists are apt to laugh at the four elements as naive constructs, but they simply represent the four phases of matter known to the chemist—solid (earth), liquid (water), gas (air), and

combustion (fire). Such “elements” very adequately explain the natural constituents of the body. Probably due to their shamanic roots, the four elements of Greek cosmology are strikingly compatible with the four directions of American Indian wisdom teachings.

Plato adopted the doctrine of the four elements from Empedocles. However, his student Aristotle argued that the four elements were not ultimate substances of matter, but the derivatives of four more primal substances: hot, cold, damp, and dry. Thus, fire was warm and dry, air was warm and damp, water was damp and cold, and earth was cold and dry. Against this the Stoics and other Greek philosophers argued that fire was hot, air dry, water damp, and earth cold. Proclus, who held the seat of Archon of the Academy, eight hundred years after Plato and Aristotle, shortly before the closure of that great school by the Christian emperor Justinian, showed through textual analysis that Aristotle had actually misunderstood Plato.

The physicians adopted the Aristotelian model, although Proclus had an influence on the alchemists and other proto-scientists who adopted the Platonic paradigm. Thus, the four qualities of hot and cold, damp and dry, became the basis of the “energetics” in Greek medicine. Polybus, the son-in-law of Hippocrates, fashioned a system of four humors and temperaments corresponding to the four qualities, and Galen officially adopted the qualities—this was five hundred years after Aristotle first introduced them—as the basis of medicine.

The four elements, or the four qualities, were considered to be the basis of the “formal” causes of events and bodies in the world. The word “form” *(eidos, eidaea)* means something like “archetype”—the elements or qualities were conceived to be the archetypal and formative substratum of the world. At the same time they were conceived in physical terms—solid, liquid, gas, combustion. For Aristotle, the form was inseparable from matter, upon which it was stamped like an identity pattern.

THE FOUR QUALITIES

We should not imagine that the four qualities—hot, cold, damp, dry—are identical to changes measured on a thermometer or barometer, or even to the sensations we experience by those names. The Greeks were unable to measure temperature and humidity so they described their actions. Here is Aristotle's description of the properties of the four qualities (Mure, 1964, 73):

> Hot is that which associates things of the same kind … while cold … associates homogeneous and heterogeneous things alike. Fluid is that which, being readily adaptable in shape, is not determinable by any limit of its own, while dry is that which is readily determinable by its own limit, but readily adaptable in shape.

If we define substances in this way what we call water would have been "cold and dry" when it was ice, "cold and wet" when it was liquid, and "wet and warm" when it was vapor. So we see that hot and cold, damp and dry, don't signify what we take them to mean today.

The four qualities were further divided into four degrees of intensity. Once again, these degrees have nothing to do with temperature, barometric pressure, or any kind of scale or continuum of measurement. Rather, each degree corresponds to a property of the quality, and each degree is more intense as the number increases from one to four. Let's try to define these differences.

HOT

The primary effect of heat is to purify a substance by removing impurities, like ore removed from metal in a forge. Heat in the first degree opens the pores of the skin and tissues to let fluids flow out; heat in the second degree thins fluids so that they can flow out through the pores; heat in the third degree increases the innate heat of the body that drives the fluids out through the pores; and heat in the fourth degree burns the skin to remove foreign growths. Thus,

heat has four actions, increasing in intensity: it is *opening, thinning, warming,* and *burning*.

COLD

In contrast, cold is conceived as that which binds together completely different constituents, no matter what their relationship. (This, of course, makes them "compound," or impure, in comparison to fire, which makes them "simple" or pure.) The different parts of the organism—organs, tissues, and psychic components—are bound together by the cold quality; it is necessary for integrated life. The organism, for the Greeks, is a "compound" body. Hence, cold remedies not only cool and relieve heat, but they hold together the organism. Thus, cold in the first degree cools the body on a hot summer day, refreshes the spirits, and returns the temperature to normal; cold in the second degree abates active inflammation; cold in the third degree thickens and contains substances within the organism, such as sweat and diarrhea, also condensing "vapors" that rise and cause nervousness, restlessness, and madness. Cold in the fourth degree causes unconsciousness and pain relief. Consequently, cold has four actions: it is *refreshing, cooling, thickening*, and *anodyne*.

DRY

Damp and dry are measurements of humidity rather than temperature. Like hot and cold, the ancients understood them as categories rather than as sensations or observable chemical states. Thus, dryness is that which hardens to such an extent that it causes a boundary that keeps things within, especially fluids. Dry remedies are therefore *"strengthening to nature" (acclimatizing, resistance-building), binding (astringent), hardening,* and *drawing*.

DAMP

Moisture spreads unstoppably in all directions until it meets a boundary. Damp remedies are *loosening* or *relaxing, moistening, softening,* and *nourishing*.

The four qualities were the basis of practice for Galen. They were the foundation of his "dogma" or "rationale," from which he called his school the "dogmatic" or "rational." According to Galen, treatment was always by "hot to cold," or "cold to hot," "damp to dry," and so forth. This was formulated as the so-called "law of contraries." However, Galen also recognized another school called the "methodists" because they believed in a single rationale or dogma (purging and astringing). They developed the following energetic system.

THE TWO TISSUE STATES

The methodists took their cue from the atomic theory of Greek science—all substances are composed of invisible primal particles or "atoms." If the atoms were compacted and condensed then the tissue was dense, hard, and constricted. If they were spread out or loosely compacted they produced loose, soft, relaxed tissue conditions. For the methodists, medicine adjusted the organism or its parts to the right tension. These two states were called ***status strictus*** and ***status laxus***. An admixture of the two states in one, ***status mixta***, was also recognized.

It is unfortunate that the advocates of the four qualities and the two tissue states could not agree long enough to conjoin their systems, because they supplement each other nicely. The four qualities do not address tension or relaxation. Used together, the qualities and states produce six basic pathological conditions that correspond fairly closely with the six "tissue states" recognized in physiomedicalism (nineteenth-century botanical medicine), described later in this chapter.

There was a third "school" of medicine recognized by Galen, in contrast to the dogmatic and the methodist, which he called the "empirical." This school consisted mostly of village herbalists, simplers, and untrained practitioners who had no doctrine but practiced from experience (empiricism). Galen noted that when these practitioners did follow a doctrine, however, it was usually

“like treats like” based on the “doctrine of signatures” (the plant looks like the disease, person, or organ of the body).

The empirical school was long persecuted, but it was organized into a system by Paracelsus in the sixteenth century. This became the alchemical school, which will be discussed below. For Paracelsus, the four elements were largely unimportant; instead, he divided the natural world into three substances: essence, energy, and body *(mercurius, sulphur*, and *salt)*.

THE FIFTH ELEMENT, OR QUINTESSENCE

The doctrine of a “fifth essence” or *ether* from which the other elements arose is as old as the doctrine of the four elements. The first element or *quinta essentia* was associated with the *empyreum*, or “fixed stars,” and thus with unchangeable eternal reality, while the four *essentia* or elements were associated with the changeable conditions on Earth. The doctrine of the quintessence never became important in Greek medicine, but the idea of the underlying essence reappears in alchemical medicine, where it is very important. The fifth element is also very important in Ayurvedic and Chinese thinking.

Ayurvedic Medicine

The most ancient texts of Ayurvedic medicine show affinities to the shamanism that was brought down from Asia by Aryan invaders one or two millennia before Christ, as well as to indigenous concepts of the Indus Valley cultures they conquered. At a later date we find the tendency toward rational explanation typical of Greek medicine. Indeed, there is evidence of borrowing back and forth between Greece and India. Still later, these rational treatises are framed with references to the gods and the divine seers who gave out the texts so that the texts became divine and unquestionable.

India is a big place and the timeline for the writing of these texts is long, so there is evidence of different systems being brought

together from different sources. During the period of rational analysis attempts at integration and subdivision were made. Thus, Ayurvedic medicine has many different categories that are subdivided logically into smaller categories or pathological descriptions. The approach has more of the analytical, logical feel of Aristotelianism than the intuitive approach of traditional Chinese medicine.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Ayurvedic medicine possesses the same four elements of Greek philosophy (fire, air, water, earth), with the addition of a fifth (ether, or wind). This is so similar to the Greek concept that we might suppose there is some cultural continuity here between the two systems. Wind or ether, as in Greek philosophy, has the attribute of acting on the other elements and causing them to change. However, in India the fifth element has assumed greater importance and interactivity with the other four, so that in truth there are five elements.

THE THREE DOSHAS

The use of three basic categories to classify constitutions has been developed both in India and, more recently, in the West. The Indian conception refers to three *doshas* or "tinges" that influence the health of the constitution. The Western system boils down to three body types: thin, medium, and thick. The two systems are quite similar and compatible, but also different in subtle ways. Many practitioners use them interchangeably and the Indian names, which are easier to pronounce than the Western terms ("asthenic" or "ectomorph," for instance, would be "vata"), have been adopted to the Western conceptions.

Nineteenth-century Western physicians used a system of three types—nervous, motive, and visceral—which correspond closely to the system of three somatotypes established through statistical

studies by Dr. William Sheldon, a psychologist: *ectomorph* (thin), *mesomorph* (medium), and *endomorph* (thick). German medicine recognizes thin (asthenic) and thick (sthenic). These terms are sometimes used in biomedicine in America and Germany as descriptive terms on intake forms.

VATA

When *vata* is exaggerated the skin tends to be dry, appetite reduced, with tendencies to gas and constipation, excessive nervousness, wasting, weakness, anxiety, insomnia, tremor, and fatigue (even from thinking about stress). The tongue tends to be dry, thin, long, narrow, and in severe cases, withered. As a constitutional type, *vata* is thin, underdeveloped physically, but mentally overactive, slightly dark, with cool, dry, rough, or even cracked skin. The *ectomorph* tends to be thin, with a high forehead and a long face. This indicates enhanced intellectual and sensory activities with medium muscular and digestive powers. The mind is open but changeable, the physical body of medium to poor strength, with little endurance.

PITTA

The *mesomorph* tends to be medium built, strapping, strong, with a strong, fixed eye, prominent cheekbones, strong will power and determination. There are two types of *pitta*, the dark and the red. When the latter is exaggerated what we call the circulatory system and the immune system are overactive, with full vessels, reddish surface, tendencies to heat, irritation of the capillaries, allergies, high blood pressure, and heart disease. In the darker people, the liver and gallbladder are strong, leading to strong willfulness, but a tendency to fevers, sallow complexion, and indigestion. The tongue is elongated, carmine red, and pointed.

KAPHA

The *endomorph* tends to be more thickly built than the others, with large, round surfaces. The lower part of the face, especially the jawbone, is prominent, indicating a strong digestive tract. The eyes

tend to have a relaxed or even sleepy look. The countenance is relaxed, more peaceful than the other types, with subtle feelings. When *kapha* is aggravated there is a tendency for water to build up in the tissues, for mucus to form, for respiratory congestion. The system becomes heavy, congested, cold, inert, fatigued, and sleepy. The digestion and elimination are faulty, with tendencies to constipation. The tongue is round and moist, sometimes coated.

Although the three *doshas*, or *tridosha*, are commonly and widely used by American and Canadian herbalists, they represent only one aspect of Ayurvedic teaching and they have been modified (as I have done above) by native traditions within the Western inheritance, so that their use is not exactly representative of standard Ayurveda. Furthermore, it represents use of only a tiny portion of the entire tradition.

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Like the Greek philosophers and the early Ayurvedic physicians, early Chinese science, philosophy, and medicine were founded upon the idea of providing rational explanations for natural events, but whereas the Greek approach became in time attached to a system that was primarily mathematical and logical, the Chinese were more interested in an intuitive or energetic approach, thus using the doctrine of correspondences. About the fourth century BCE, two schools emerged, one centered on the doctrine of dual opposites or complements (yin/yang) and the other on the doctrine of five elements (wind, fire, earth, water, metal). Whereas, in the West, the tendency has always been for one doctrine to triumph over and eradicate the other, in China syncretism has been more common. Thus, the early proponents of two different systems of yin/yang theory and one system of five element theory fought a sometimes heated battle for supremacy, but instead of one school winning, all were adopted alongside one another. When the earliest great classic

of Chinese medicine appeared, *The Yellow Emperor's Classic*, the yin/yang and five element schools had both been adopted by scientific physicians.

YIN AND YANG

Originally *yin* meant the shady side of the mountain and *yang* the sunny side. This poetic dichotomy was developed as cosmological principles, so that yin stood for the feminine, dark, passive principle and yang for the masculine, light, active side. In medicine yin and yang came to have quite practical rather than metaphysical meanings. Yin substance is sedating, moistening, and nourishing, while yang energy is stimulating, commanding, and protective. Yin diseases are deep, internal, chronic, cold, and deficient or empty, whereas yang diseases are superficial, external, acute, warm or hot, and full.

THE EIGHT CATEGORIES

The study of opposite qualities eventually led to the construction of eight guiding criteria or categories used to describe the basic parameters of disease in practical terms. The yin categories are: deficiency, cold, internal, and yin, while the yang categories are excess or full, hot, external, and yang. These categories are very practical and are well worth study by students of all systems of medicine.

COLD

Person is quiet, withdrawn, assumes a fetal position in bed, pale or greenish complexion, clear or tearing eyes, desire to close them, excess saliva, no thirst, desire for warm food, pale or bluish violet lips, nail flesh of the same color, tongue moist, coating of the tongue lacking or white and slippery, body of the tongue pale or pink,

expectoration (if any) thin, clear to whitish, copious, clear, copious urine, liquid feces, pulse slow or deep.

HOT

The person is restless, moves readily, lies on back with legs extended, complexion red, sclera of the eye red, thirsty, desire for cold food, reduced saliva, lips red, swollen, dry, or cracked, nail flesh red to violet, coating of the tongue increased, yellow, sometimes showing red, swollen papillae, tongue body hard, leathery, shrunken, copious expectoration yellow and thick, scanty, dark urine, constipation, extremities warm, pulse rapid.

DEFICIENCY

Mental exhaustion, nervous exhaustion but easily overstimulated, insomnia, dizziness, tinnitus, loss of appetite, pale complexion, lips pale, weak voice, sore throat, shortness of breath, irregular breathing, asthma, spontaneous perspiration, reduced warmth of extremities, intermittent bloating of abdomen, abdominal pains better by pressure (massage), diarrhea, limpness and numbness of hands and feet, palpitations, twitching.

EXCESS

Expressions loud, excessive, violent dizziness, headache, great quantities of sputum, impeded breathing (patient cannot lie down), mouth breathing, pulls up shoulders, noises and rumbling in stomach, foul or sour eructations, nausea, vomiting, bloated, distended abdomen, stool dry and hard, or diarrhea, painful, tense muscles, worse from pressure (massage); if the blood is involved (congealed blood) bruises easily, stabbing pains, purple or darkened tongue body, choppy pulse.

INTERNAL

Disturbance arises in or has moved down into the deep interior of the body, hence diseases arising from or affecting the organs and deep emotions, deep-seated, established, prolonged, and chronic

illness, continuous fever rising and falling periodically, pains in the abdomen and breast, dry mouth, coating of the tongue yellow, gray, or black, pulse deep.

EXTERNAL

Disturbance is in the outside, surface, or periphery of the body, resulting in a superficial, ephemeral, acute, recent, or receding disease affecting the skin and external defenses of the body. Fever accompanied by chills, aches of the head and extremities, nose stopped up, coating of the tongue missing or reduced in thickness, superficial pulse.

YIN

Cold, deficiency, and internality are all yin symptoms. Face sallow, pale, greenish white, demeanor atonic, listless, tired, looks wasted, enfeebled, reclining position, reluctant to move, tongue body pale, swollen, soft, coating moist, sleek, slippery, voice low and weak, faltering, reluctant, feeble or heavy breathing, shortness of breath, reduced thirst and appetite, refuses food, sometimes wants warm beverages, urine clear and copious, abdominal pains better by pressure, cold body and extremities, pulse deep, slow, always weak.

YANG

Hot, excess, and externality are all yang symptoms. Hence, the person is red, restless, lips dry or cracked, tongue body red or scarlet, coating yellow, loud, excessive voice, talkative, noisy, breath loud, panting, feeling of heat, asks for cold air, refuses food, finds even smell of food repulsive, dry mouth, thirst intense, urine scanty and dark, stool hard, difficult to expel, sometimes malodorous, abdominal pains, worse from pressure, warm or hot body and extremities, pulse superficial, rapid, full, always strong.

“Describing symptoms observed with reference to the guiding criteria not only brings clarity into an otherwise purely subjective

description," writes Manfred Porkert (1983, 32), but "it also is the first step toward a differentiation and generalization of symptoms."

One person can be a combination of the different parameters. For instance, a person can suffer from excess external heat (yang blazing out of control), deficient external heat (the periphery is weak and lets in the yang but only on the surface), deficient internal heat (internal yin deficiency causes heat), excess internal heat (too much internal heat production), deficient internal cold (no internal heat), deficient external cold (weak periphery lets in cold), external cold (cold from the environment), and so on. "Such combinations give almost unlimited flexibility of precise qualification" (Porkert, 1983, 32).

Yin and yang are also subdivided in a different fashion that is useful. Yin consists of a general yin (fluids) and a more specific yin (blood). The former is more moistening, the later more nutritive. Yang consists of a more general yang (heat) and a more specific component (*qi*, energy). Pathology in TCM is often explained by deficiency: yin deficiency (lack of fluids), blood deficiency (lack of nutrition), yang deficiency (lack of heat), and *qi* deficiency (lack of energy).

THE FIVE ELEMENTS

The doctrine of five elements or "phases" appears very early in Chinese history, well before the fifth century BCE. It would take some time before they became a part of medical diagnosis and therapy. Whereas the four elements in Greek science are really chemical (solid, liquid, and so forth), the five Chinese elements are more like "phases" that succeed one another in a continually changing world. They are also the basis of an extensive system of correspondences. They act upon each other creatively and destructively.

One can see a remote resemblance between fire, metal, water, and earth in China, and fire, air, water, and earth in the West, with wood (or sometimes wind) taking the position of the fifth element.

It should be pointed out that the five phase system, as used in Chinese acupuncture and herbalism, is more metaphysical than the pragmatic *zangfu* or organ system method, which emphasizes the deficiencies (or occasional excesses) of yin, blood, *qi*, and yang in the major systems of the body. Some practitioners think the five phase system is too theoretical. For instance, Li Shi Zhen's twelfth-century classic on *Pulse Diagnosis* (Hoc Ku Huynh, 1985) doesn't even mention the five phases and instead attributes pathology to yin and yang, *qi* and blood, excess and deficiency, and a few other pathological conditions that are observed in the organism and have no basis in correspondence. The modern classic, Ted Kaptchuk's *The Web That Has No Weaver* (1983), almost ignores the five phases.

Because the five elements are not used here, I have not included information on them or their correspondences, which can be found in most textbooks on TCM.

Alchemical Medicine

All three traditions described above included an alchemical component in their worldview. Alchemy was basically concerned with the breakdown of naturally occurring substances into their primal constituents. From an early era, all three traditions recognized three primary substances, which could be called essence (primal configuration), energy (primal energy), and body (primal material). The first was that which gave an entity its form, pattern, or constitution, the second was the intrinsic energy or life force, while the third was the matter. By itself, matter was formless, requiring form to stamp some sort of characteristics upon it.

Paracelsus (1493–1541) was the primary instigator of the alchemical revolution in medicine. This gave rise to the physio-chemical impulse in conventional medicine and foreshadowed the chief doctrines and practices of homeopathy. It was Paracelsus who gave the classic definition for the three primal substances: "that which rises in the smoke is *mercurius* [essence], that which burns is *sulphur* [energy], that which remains in the ash is *salt* [matter]." As

can be seen, this provides a simple conception of chemistry embracing distillation, oxidation, and precipitation, while at the same time associating chemical substances with spiritual identity. This is in fact the major difference between alchemy and chemistry. Both work with substances, but one with spiritual/physical matter, the other with physical matter alone.

In the West each of the three primal substances was further divided into a part that was spirit-like or essential and a part that was material or "gross." Thus, *mercurius* was divided into the "volatile spirit" that preserved the essence and a sort of watery waste product or phlegm (mucilage). *Sulphur* was divided into a "volatile oil" that was responsible for the expression of energy in a constitutional fashion, and a "fixed oil" that merely burned as the life force, from birth to death. The "fixed oils" were nutritious. *Salt* was divided into salts or minerals that carried more essence or intelligence into the material realm, and the *mortuus caput* or mere material (sand, alumino-silicates). These subdivisions became the basis of pharmacy and chemistry, and some of these terms are still with us today.

Because it was concerned with uncovering the essence *(essentia)*, alchemical medicine in any of these cultures tended to move medicine in a different direction. Instead of emphasizing hot and cold, and treatment by opposites (hot to cold, and so forth), alchemy tended to emphasize the primal essence of the remedy and treatment of the primal essence or disturbed essence in the sick person. The remedy and the sickness were seen as having a "similarity" and thus followed the "law of similars," or like treats like. This very often involved treatment by the law of correspondence or the doctrine of signatures (the plant looks like the organ or disease).

According to the law of correspondence all creatures, plants, and minerals are in correspondence through like essences, so that bloodroot *(Sanguinaria)* contains an essence related to blood, while eyebright *(Euphrasia)* contains an essence related to the eyes. These correspondences are revealed through "signatures"—bloodroot has an unusual red sap and eyebright has a marking on it like an eye.

Not only are remedies and diseases related through “similarity” but by “specificity” because bloodroot is a specific for the blood. They are also bound by “affinity” because eyebright has an affinity to the eyes. The term “organ affinity” was introduced by some of Paracelsus’s students, though he himself still used the Galenic term, *appropriation*—the remedy is appropriated by a specific part of the body.

Although alchemical themes are found in the earliest layers of traditional medicine, in all parts of the world, Paracelsus was the first to bring them together into a comprehensive system. This in turn became the origin of pharmacy, drug-making, and the modern chemical perspective in medicine, in which the molecules are seen as the primal seat of medicinal power or disease expression. At the same time, through a different interpretation, Paracelsian medicine became the origin of a practice more akin to homeopathy, where the essential nature of the remedy is related by similarity to the essential nature of the disease. For Paracelsus the relationship was primarily through the doctrine of signatures. On the other hand, for Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, the relationship was through drug-action: the remedy causing the symptoms for which it was remedial. These are really two very different approaches, the former magical, the latter pharmacological.

The fact that alchemical medicine and homeopathy work by the “law of similars” while Galenic, Chinese, and Ayurvedic herbalism work by the “law of contraries” is interpreted by many as evidence that herbalism and homeopathy are opposing systems of medicine. This is not correct, however, as *most remedies cure the same condition by both similarity and contrariety, depending on whether one arrives at the prescription by the doctrine of signatures or by opposing energetic categories*. Thus, for example, angelica acts on the blood by virtue of the red/blue/purple color of the large, hollow stalks and on the circulation by virtue of the warming and stimulating presence of volatile oils.

Differences in application can sometimes be achieved by reducing or increasing the dosage—another difference between herbalism (large dose) and homeopathy (small dose). However, *in almost all*

cases herbs used in homeopathy are used for the same purpose as they are used in herbalism—chamomile for calming babies, elder for fevers and coughing, boneset for influenza, yarrow for bleeding, and so forth. It is only when a plant is poisonous that it truly shows opposite properties in its herbal and homeopathic application, but *The Earthwise Herbal* is not concerned with poisons. The difference between herbs and poisons will be discussed in the volume on the New World materia medica of traditional Western herbalism.

In my experience, the herbal, homeopathic, and flower essence application of a medicinal plant are all related, though not always identical, since there are some variations when different parts and amounts of a plant are used. The indications from each school should be viewed as lying on a continuum rather than an opposition —except where an agent is so strong that it is poisonous—that is, it is forceful in its action on the organism.

In short, the alchemical heritage particularly emphasizes the idea of an essence or essential plant personality, which has come to suffuse homeopathy and flower essence therapy, and to have some influence on herbalism through writers like Dorothy Hall and myself. Another element that descends from this tradition is that of the "specific indication" found in eclectic medicine or the "characteristic" or "keynote" symptom found in homeopathy. I would like to better define these concepts before continuing.

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS

The doctrine of "specific medicine," or the use of a specific remedy based on characteristic, specific indications, was developed by Dr. John Scudder and was one of the guiding lights of eclectic medicine. The eclectics, with the physiomedicalists, were nineteenth-century American botanical doctors. Yet, the doctrine has roots in the ancient practices of the simplers, or empirics, who used a small number of remedies for specific indications or conditions. The alchemists, with their emphasis on the "essence" of the plant also used specific remedies. William Salmon (1710) cited a "specifickation" for almost every herb in *The English Herbal*.

Scudder pointed out that old practitioners often knew a certain number of remedies that they used very reliably as “specifics.” These were usually derived from experience rather than pharmacological theory or knowledge. Scudder noted that these remedies were not specific to the name of a disease, which was man-made, but to a natural pattern or characteristic expression that occurred as the disease unfolded. For example, quinine was considered a specific for malaria, but it was not suited to all cases. “Probably there is no remedy in the materia medica which gives so many failures as this,” Scudder (1870, 219) commented. “I think we may be safe in assuming that it is given ten times where its specific action is obtained once.” His specific indication is: “A soft and open pulse, a moist skin, and moist and cleaning tongue.”

A specific indication not only points to a precise remedy but to a precise pathological state, not a disease name. In the above example the pulse and tongue indicate that a free secretion of perspiration and other fluids in the body has been established prior to the use of the quinine. Clearly, there can be levels of specificity, from “malaria” at the low end to “malaria with free secretion of fluids” to Scudder’s precise pulse and tongue indications.

In this volume I have attempted to bring out the specificity, but I have included even symptoms that are “poorly developed.”

The terms “characteristic symptoms” and “keynotes” are used in homeopathy to describe symptoms that lead to a specific remedy and I have sometimes used these terms instead of “specific indications.” Homeopathic characteristic symptoms, however, do not lead to as clear a pathological picture as Scudder’s “specifics,” which are not just characteristic of the remedy, but of the entire pathology.

Physiomedicalism

After the demise of Greek medicine, European medical doctors still had to use humoral or energetic evaluation to understand and treat pathology because they knew so little about the inner workings of

the organism. It is often thought by modern critics that in fact they knew nothing, but medicine can be inventive as well as misguided, and I have often been impressed that the age of "heroic" medicine, a period of great confusion between the fall of the Greek system and the rise of modern biomedicine, produced many practical medical solutions. It was this age (not Greek or traditional medicine) that discovered willow bark and aspirin, the mechanism for which was uncovered only in the last several decades.

The fall of the Greek theory meant that doctors essentially used the same ideas but gave them "modern" names. Thus, instead of *heat*, they spoke of *irritation* or *excitation* or *overstimulation*. The "theory of irritation," in vogue in the eighteenth century, explained that nerve tissue, and by extension, all tissue, was *irritated* by stimulation, became *constricted*, then returned to *relaxation*. Failure to respond to stimulation was called *depression*. Lack of reaction due to malnutrition and wasting was known as *atrophy*. Thus, five "tissue states" (excitation, tension, atrophy, relaxation, and depression) came to be informally recognized in medicine—one will still find these terms used descriptively in a physiology textbook.

Sometimes a sixth condition was added, *torpor*, which was used to describe the prolongation of fever and other diseases by the presence of toxins, humors, or fluids that slowed down the natural response of the organism to healing and made the healing process long, drawn-out, and clouded or difficult-to-follow, so to speak. Thus, for instance, when a fever would have been expected to bring a rash to the surface quickly, instead the rash receded or delayed or became complicated with toxic materials that made for high heat or irregular interludes. *Torpor* was often associated with "humors in the blood" (English), "impure blood" (German), or "bad blood" (American Indian). I have called it "stagnation."

Dr. Joseph M. Thurston (1900), a physiomedicalist, or follower of the early American herbalist Samuel Thomson, organized the "six tissue states" in 1900. The names Thurston gave to them are so convoluted that I have ignored them. However, the "six tissue states" of Thurston correspond closely with the four qualities and the two tissue states of Greek medicine and to various "energetic"

values in traditional medicine. I give them the following links:

Hot/Excitation	Dry/Atrophy	Wind/Tension
Cold/Depression	Damp/Stagnation	Damp/Relaxation

These are the energetics used in *The Earthwise Herbal*. In one way or another, either in their Greek or post-Greek form, these energetic categories underlie the arrangement of the Western pharmacopoeia into medical categories. Thus, for example, an astringent is drying, or counters damp discharges and relaxation of tissue. Again, a stimulant is activating and warming, so it opposes cold and depression. Once we understand the energetics of Western herbal medicine, we can see the underlying logic of the whole enterprise.

The six tissue states correspond with the four qualities and two tissue states of the Greek physicians. The correlations with their most simple indications are:

HOT/EXCITATION

Overstimulation, overactivity of the organism, resulting in heat, redness, tenderness, swelling, a rapid or raised pulse, an elongated, carmine red, pointed tongue, mental lack of focus, lack of concentration, or restlessness. When the heat goes deep in the organism the tongue color is dark red.

COLD/DEPRESSION

Inability to respond to stimulation, hence tissue depression, lack of sensation, insensibility, cold extremities, cold, inactive skin, poor digestion, fatigue, sluggishness, tissues pale or dark, blue, purple, gray, or black, pulse slow or low, tongue pale or dark.

DRY/ATROPHY

Lack of fluids (water and oil), hence inability to receive nutrients or carry away waste products, resulting in a thin, emaciated condition with nervousness and restlessness (because the nervous system does not waste), weakness, lack of trophism (function) in organs, dry

skin, dry colon, constipation, poor digestion with gas and bloating, pulse tense and weak, tongue body thin, long, and in bad cases withered.

DAMP/STAGNATION

Excess of fluids caught in the tissues, not able to excrete or eliminate, thickening and collecting, with collection of waste products as well, resulting in cold (water is cold), indigestion, lymphatic congestion, tendency to easily get sick (low immunity), or tendency of fevers and sickness to run exaggerated, longer courses than usual (to burn off the accumulating toxins), lack of expression of the tissues, lack of facial expression, thickened mucus on the mucosa, pulse "obscure" (filminess obscures the sharpness of the beat), tongue coated, body enlarged, pale.

DAMP/RELAXATION

Continuous loss of fluids from the body due to open pores and collapsed or prolapsed tissues, resulting in excessive perspiration, salivation, mucous expectoration, diarrhea, clear, copious urine, or menstrual bleeding, with exhaustion, fatigue, pale skin with blue veins showing through, sometimes with red on the cheeks, anemia from kidneys not signaling the bone marrow to produce red blood cells, pulse nonresistant, tongue moist, with streamers down the sides between the midline and the edges.

WIND/TENSION

I have introduced the word "wind" from Asian medicine as it describes this tissue state. Psychological or physical tension or both, nerves and muscles taunt, conditions that come on suddenly or leave suddenly or alternate back and forth, especially diarrhea and constipation, or fever and chills, resulting in a tense, hard, or wiry pulse.

When reading Western herbal literature written prior to 1950 there is usually an underlying supposition that the herb fits one of these categories, even if it is not stated or defined in the text.

Integration: Pharmacology, Taste, and Energetics

Another element of empiricism or experiential medicine involves the knowledge of taste. Here I must express my indebtedness to David Winston, herbalist (AHG), for making a correlation between tastes, pharmacology, and energetics. I have given my own interpretation to his teachings, so they do not represent his approach entirely, but his research is the basis of my own.

Another practitioner who relies heavily on taste is Keith Robertson, co-director with his wife, Maureen, of the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine, in Glasgow. He teaches students medicinal plants by introducing them to the taste, soliciting their impressions based on the taste, and only then revealing their names, traditional uses, and pharmacology. Thus, the student from the beginning has a pragmatic experience of the plant.

The old empirical herbalists, by the sense of taste, often gained their understanding of the medicinal properties of plants. For instance, Samuel Thomson (1769–1843), the great popularizer of herbalism in nineteenth-century America, looked for three basic properties in the taste: heat, roughness (astringence), and bitterness. Galen analyzed taste and its relationship to the four qualities. For instance, the sharp flavor (pungent or spicy) was warming, astringence drying, sweetness moistening. Turning to modern worldwide herbalism we find that taste is the basic category used for classification in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine.

In considering taste, we have to acknowledge a limitation in our vocabulary. Very often what the old herbalists were looking for was not just what we call the flavor, but the impression a medicine makes through the nerves or sensations of the mouth. Thus, for example, astringence is not a taste proper, but a sensation. The four actual flavors are sweet, salty, bitter, and sour. To this is usually

added pungence or spiciness, though it is technically a smell, not a flavor. (Thus, in herbalism, pungence is associated with the "aromatics" or herbs containing large quantities of volatile oils.)

In this book the word "taste" will be subdivided to include the flavor, temperature/humidity, and impression. **Flavor** refers to sour, bitter, salty, sweet, and pungent. **Temperature and humidity** refers to the four qualities of Greek medicine: hot, cold, damp, dry. **Impression** refers to the sensation the medicine produces on the nerves and tissues. For instance, the tingle felt in the taste of echinacea is not technically a flavor but is evidence of nerve stimulation.

Some "tastes" have been included that are rather uncommon in the Vegetable Kingdom: meaty (meat, mushrooms, eggplant, nettles) and metallic (taste of blood in the mouth). Aromaticity (a word I learned from Avicenna) is listed under impression.

Flavor	**Temperature and Humidity**	**Impression**
Sour	Hot	Diffusive (tingling, nerve-stimulating)
Bitter	Cold	Permanent (not tingling, lack of nerve reaction)
Salty	Damp	Astringent (puckering, constrictive)
Sweet	Dry	Acridity (taste of bile in the throat; taste that provokes shivering)
Pungent (spicy or sharp)		Watery (thin)
		Mucilaginous (slimy)
		Gummy (tacky)
		Resinous (sticky)
		Soapy
		Oily (nutty)
		Meaty (proteinaceous)

Metallic (taste of blood in the mouth; presence of metals)
Aromatic (scent)

In *The Earthwise Herbal* each herb will be described as follows:

Taste: flavor • temperature/humidity • impression

Although care has been taken to define these terms, I will be forthright in stating that the entries under taste are still somewhat contingent. It is difficult to appraise tastes. I have used my own sense of taste or "reputable sources"—that is, well-known literature. For best results, the taste should be determined by using a wide pool of participants. Keith Robertson, who has done such experimentation with a wide group, pointed out places where I had the taste incorrect in my earlier writings.

Although correlations between tissue states, pharmacological substances, and the major tastes are not exact, a general breakdown runs something like this:

Tissue State	Treatment	Taste	Pharmacology
Heat/Excitation	Cooling	Sour	Flavonoids, cyanogens
Cold/Depression	Warming	Pungent	Aromatics, volatile oils
Dry/Atrophy	Moistening	Salty	Mucilages, emollients
	Nourishing	Sweet	Carbohydrates
Damp/Stagnation	Purifying	Bitter	Bitters
Wind/Tension	Relaxing	Acrid	Acrid bitters
Damp/Relaxation	Tightening	Astringent	Tannins

Bitters that act on damp/stagnation cause secretion in the gastrointestinal tract and gallbladder, thus stimulating feeding and waste removal. Acrid bitters produce the sensation of bile in the back of the throat. They can cause a shiver to go through the body. Thus, they are for tension, which, through the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system, causes bilious upset and shivering.

Cyanogenic bitters (the taste of bitter almond) are cooling since they shut off the Krebs cycle, stopping energy production.

Most herbs follow the simple set of relationships given on the above table. However, there are always exceptions. When plant hormones, alkaloids, and various poisons are present there is a different kind of reaction in the body that is more complicated and often moves us out of the successful use of the above classification scheme.

CHAPTER TWO
Herbal Actions

The medicines in herbs are derived from the cosmic forces of sunlight, moonlight, and starlight; from rain and dew and the minerals of the earth's soil layers, as well as the hereditary properties. Any herb can have its medicinal properties analyzed to a certain extent; only the cosmic and the hereditary cannot as yet be measured, which is most unfortunate, for it is in this "streaming spirit" of the herb that most of the healing powers are contained.

—JULIETTE DE BAIRACLI LEVY (1973, 188)

As far back as the Egyptian period—several thousand years ago—physicians expressed the properties of medicines as "actions." Thus, some plants cause vomiting (emetics), purging (laxatives), urination (diuretics), sweating (diaphoretics), warmth (stimulants), pain relief (anodynes), more appetite and better digestion (carminatives), and so on. Changes in medicine caused the retirement or addition of different actions. However, the tables of herbal actions are still found today in nearly every herbal.

I always had a great deal of difficulty with these actions because they seem to break apart and scatter the properties of an herb, not revealing any sense or concept of the primal nature and wholeness of the plant. It was for this reason that I turned to the study of homeopathy—in order to study herbs. Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, experienced the same problem. In a famous passage in his translation of William Cullen's *Materia Medica*, he rebuked the author for trying to explain that quinine palliated or cured malaria because it was a bitter (increased and regulated secretions), antiperiodic (controlled alternating chills and fever), carminative

(settled the stomach), rubefacient (increased circulation to the skin and periphery), and so forth. Hahnemann felt that Cullen was treating the actions as if they were "real things," rather than mere names.

Because the lists of herbal actions seem to show no theory or concept of underlying "energy patterns" and "essences," they have frustrated many in the modern revival of natural medicine. It is often said that Western herbalism "lacks a system of energetics." However, as I showed in *The Practice of Traditional Western Herbalism*, in fact there are energetics embedded within the lists of herbal actions. The problem is that the key to these energetics has been lost.

When we run through the tables of actions, both in the Greek period and today, we find that they fall into three broad categories:

Energetic	**Organ Specific**	**Properties**
Stimulant (warming)	Diaphoretic (skin)	Emollient (softening)
Antiseptic (stimulating, warming)	Nervine, anodyne (nerves)	
	Cephalic (head)	Drawing
Refrigerant (cooling)	Pulmonic (lungs)	Thinning
Sedative (cooling, relaxing)	Cardiac (heart)	Thickening
Antispasmodic (relaxing)	Stomachic (stomach)	Opening
Demulcent or mucilage (moistening)	Hepatic (liver)	Hardening, etc.
	Laxative, cathartic (intestines)	
Nutritive	Diuretic (kidneys)	
Astringent (binding)	Antilithic (kidneys, joints)	
Alterative	Emmenagogue (uterine)	

Adaptogenic
(hypothalamus)

Many of the properties in the third category are associated with the four qualities. For instance, emollient remedies are usually moistening, hardening remedies astringent or drying, and so forth.

As we will see in the next chapter, defining a disease or herb by energetic, organ affinity, and property provides an exact foundation for a good, holistic treatment plan with herbs.

Modern Actions

The following is a list of terminology developed down through the centuries, from ancient Egypt to the present, to represent the properties or actions of medicinal agents. The list has been modified over the years, depending on how people visualize medical action. This list represents a general average from many sources, ancient to modern.

Abortifacient. Capable of inducing a miscarriage. The stronger of the emmenagogues.

Adaptogen. This is a new term for plants that help the body adapt to stress, usually by acting on the hypothalamus to improve endocrine regulation.

Alterative. "Blood purifier." Removes toxins and humors (congealed mucus or mucopolysaccharides) from the lymph and blood by improving "alteration," the Greek word for "metabolism," and elimination. These plants generally act on the liver, thyroid, endocrine system, skin, kidneys, colon, and lungs. The major symptoms of "impure blood" (German), "humors in the blood" (English), or "bad blood" (American Indian) are skin lesions. Broda Barnes (1976) considered "bad blood" equivalent to low thyroid, but this is not always the case.

Anodyne. Pain-reliever.

Antiscorbutic. Relieves scurvy; contains vitamin C.

Antiseptic. Curtails septic, putrid conditions where pus is being generated by bacteria. Equivalent to warm in the third degree in Greek medicine.

Antispasmodic. Prevents or lessens spasms and cramps.

Aperient. Causes a gentle bowel movement. Aperients often work simply by increasing secretion in the digestive tract, or relaxing the autonomic nervous system, rather than by increasing peristalsis (which would be laxative or cathartic).

Aphrodisiac. Stimulates the sex function in both sexes.

Aromatic. Plants high in volatile oils are aromatic. They are usually pungent or spicy to the taste and act as stimulants, with a few exceptions, on depressed function. Known as “warming” agents in Greek medicine.

Astringent. Plants that contain tannins cause a contraction of tissue and close pores so that fluids cannot leak out of the body. Known as “drying” agents in Greek medicine.

Bitters, bitter tonics. Plants that have a bitter taste contain a wide variety of bitter substances, most of which stimulate the flow of saliva, bile, and gastric juices. Act on the GI tract, gallbladder, and back into the liver. They can be either warming or cooling.

Carminative. These plants are usually bitter and pungent, so that they improve secretion from the stomach, expel gas, and promote the digestive function.

Cathartics. Agents containing large amounts of anthraquinones that stimulate drastic purgation. Stronger than laxatives.

Cordial. This old term refers to a plant that acts on melancholy or depression.

Demulcent. Plants containing mucopolysaccharides (mucilage), which have a coating, soothing effect similar to natural mucus. They prevent the mucosa and skin surface membranes from becoming too dry and abraded.

Diaphoretic. An agent that produces perspiration, either of water or of oil (sebum). Most diaphoretics are cooling because they relieve fever, but some are stimulating because they promote the internal fire to drive substances to the surface.

Diuretic. Agents that increase the flow of urine, either the water or the solids or both. When irritation is present diuretics are frequently combined with demulcents to soothe the tissue.

Emmenagogue. Agents that bring on the monthly menstrual period, "term," or "courses" in the old literature. Contraindicated during pregnancy, though many are not strong abortifacients.

Emollient. Agents that break up hard swellings. They usually contain sodium, which increases the ability of water to cross boundaries and get into dehydrated tissue. Culpeper (1653, 386) makes an interesting comment: "What is hard, and what is soft, most men know, but few are able to express. Physicians define that to be hard which yields not to touching, and soft to be the contrary. An emollient or softening medicine is one which reduceth a hard substance to its proper temperature."

Escharotic. Burns away tissue to remove growths and cancers.

Essential oils. These are the volatile oils that easily vaporate to produce an aroma. They are usually associated with stimulating and pungent remedies—warming agents in Greek medicine.

Expectorant. Loosens and helps to expel mucus from the respiratory tract (sinuses, throat, lungs).

Febrifuge. A remedy that reduces fever.

Fixed oils. Plants contain volatile oils (see aromatic) that evaporate in heat, and fixed oils that are more stable. The latter are used to soothe and coat (like a mucilage) and to excite the gallbladder and as a nutrient substance.

Galactagogue. Increases lactation.

Homeopathic. A remedy that causes what it cures.

Laxative. Plants containing small amounts of anthraquinones that stimulate peristalsis in the gut to promote bowel movements.

Mucilage. Mucopolysaccharides that coat and soothe mucosa and skin. Demulcents contain mucilage and are sometimes called mucilages.

Mucolytic. Removes mucus.

Nervine. Plants that act on the nervous system, usually to sedate, calm, or relax when excitement, irritation, or tension is present.

Normalizer. An agent that acts on two opposite states (such as hot and cold) to induce a normal balance between them. Most herbs are normalizers. By comparison, drugs suppress imbalances.

Relaxant. Reduces tension, acts on cramps and spasms. Originally called "loosening." "I do not mean purging," writes Culpeper (1653, 386). "The chief use of loosening medicines is in convulsions and cramps."

Sedative. Calms the nerves, reduces irritation and excitement.

Spasmolytic. Removes cramps and spasms.

Specific. A remedy with a powerful, specific action in a local area of the body; the opposite of a tonic.

Stimulant. Increases functional activity of the organism. Equivalent to warming remedies in Greek medicine.

Stomachic. Substances that improve appetite and tone the stomach.

Sweet tonic. A new category adopted from Chinese herbalism, sweet tonics are building and nutritive. They usually possess carbohydrates or proteins that are nourishing to the body. An example of a Western herb that fits this category is slippery elm bark. Eastern examples include rehmannia root, codonopsis, American ginseng, red ginseng, and reishi mushroom.

Tannins. The active ingredient in astringence.

Tonic. A remedy with a slow, generalized influence on the body, rather than a precise, localized, powerful influence. Bitter tonics increase secretion, sweet tonics increase flesh, astringent tonics increase tissue strength or tone, and so forth.

CHAPTER THREE
Putting It All Together: The Art of Herbal Practice

I shall desire thee, whoever thou art, that intendest the noble (though too much abused) study of physic, to mind heedfully these following rules; which being well understood, shew thee the Key of Galen and Hippocrates their method of physic.

—NICHOLAS CULPEPER (1653, 376)

It is generally admitted that medicine is a mixture of science and art. That is why it is called a "practice." This holds true for herbal medicine. In fact, in the present state of knowledge, herbalism must remain more of an art than biomedicine because it has not been as thoroughly researched, nor as widely practiced.

One of the greatest difficulties encountered by the beginning herbalist is learning "how to practice." In my estimation it is easier to learn to read a horoscope than plan out a good herbal program for a client. There are a great many different variables that are very little defined, if at all, in contemporary herbal education. One of the best descriptions of herbal education I ever heard was given by a holistic medical doctor in St. Paul, Chris Foley. He said, "Learning herbalism is like learning to play baseball by learning to run from first base to second, then how to catch a ball in left field, then how to throw a strike." That is, indeed, how most of us in my generation learned herbalism.

This chapter is dedicated to changing all that. We are going to learn the logic of how to use herbal medicines and we're going to find out that this method goes back to the most ancient sources of our tradition. It was known to Galen, who built the edifice of Greek

medicine. It was also known to the founder of English language herbalism, Nicholas Culpeper (1616–54).

Herbalism has long been associated with eccentrics and self-taught individuals fighting against the grain of society. That would be Nicholas Culpeper in a nutshell. Even his surname meant "rubbing someone the wrong way," or literally, "rubbing pepper" in their face. The son of a conservative Anglican clergyman, he studied astrology, ran off with a wealthy heiress (who was struck by lightning and killed), dropped out of college, apprenticed himself to an apothecary, practiced illegally with an apothecary, and put his education to work making medical knowledge available in plain English. He championed herbal medicine as a relatively safe, effective method of medicine suitable for self-treatment. Taking advantage of a breakdown in censorship and law enforcement during the English Civil War and Interregnum, Culpeper published many popular books on medicine that rubbed pepper in the face of the medical establishment. He gave the general public a simple, readable plan for self-treatment called *The Complete Herbal*. It is the only book other than the Bible that has never been out of print since 1653. (Let's keep it that way!)

Culpeper is best known for his astrological approach to herbal medicine. He uses the planets and signs as his energetic system. He was a practicing astrologer and he saw the logic and worth of putting these two systems together. Many had done this before him, but few would do it afterward. Unfortunately, most people (both in his time and today) do not practice astrology and this has made his system difficult to follow. I personally wish he had organized *The Complete Herbal* around the old Greek system. It is easier to understand—especially the way he explains it. This explanation is, I believe, one of the most simple, practical lessons on how to practice herbalism ever written. It is certainly easier to understand than his astrological system.

"A Key to Galen's Method of Physick"

Galen had written dozens of compendious tomes on medicine. Out of these he distilled his essential directions down to a large encyclopedia called *De methodo medendi*. Then he wrote a shortened version, *Ad Glauconem de medendi methodo libri II*. This was still too long so he wrote a final abridgement called the *Ars medica* (Art of Medicine).

The first of these three treatises was known in medieval times as the *Megatechne* or *Ars magna* (The Greater Work). It runs to a thousand pages in a modern German translation. The short abridgement, *Ars medica*, was known as the *Microtechne, Tegne*, or *Ars parva* (Lesser Work). It is just over a hundred pages in modern translation. It was popular, not only because it was easier to read, but because there wasn't a lot of paper to spare in the Middle Ages. (Ever wonder why all those ancient books disappeared?) The *Ars medica* was Galen's most popular book; it has come down to us in numerous manuscript copies made in Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew. It was "one of the most widely used medical books of the whole past" (Sarton, 1956, 67). The *Ars medica* was translated by Culpeper and issued in 1653 under the title *Art of Physick*. It is still the only English translation of this important work.

Culpeper felt that Galen's system could be abbreviated, so he wrote "A Key to Galen's Method of Physick." This was included in some editions of his pharmacopoeia and herbal. It takes up a mere twenty pages, and yet it proves to be one of the most practical, complete, and succinct set of directions for the practice of herbal medicine possible to imagine. The "Key" is reproduced in the Meyerbooks publication of *Culpeper's Complete Herbal, & English Physician, Enlarged* (1990), and elsewhere.

The "Key" says that there are three basic aspects of disease we need to know in order to differentiate it sufficiently from other diseases so that the appropriate remedy or formula can be found. These are:

- **Quality (Energetic)**
- **Appropriation (Location in the Body)**
- **Property (Action)**

We have already covered all three of these subjects in the preceding chapters, so now we can put them together. Let's take an example. Imagine a person has a stomach problem. With some questioning and perhaps medical diagnosis we reach the conclusion that it is definitely situated in the stomach—that it is not a heart attack or an intestinal problem. Thus, we have the *appropriation* or location for the disease. Next we want to find out what is the type or kind of disease afflicting the stomach in energetic terms. In other words, is it a hot, cold, dry, damp, tense, or relaxed stomach? For the sake of completeness, I will go over each of these conditions. A hot stomach will show in an overstimulated upper GI tract, with excess salivation and appetite, excessive acid, gastric reflux, and an elongated, red, pointed tongue. The remedies are those that cool the stomach—peach and yellow dock would be my favorites. A cold stomach would be depressed, so it would need stimulation. There would be a lack of appetite, saliva, and digestive juices, so the person neither enjoys nor handles food very well. It sits in the stomach, rots, and generates acids and esophageal reflux of a different kind. This is the condition for which European medicine prescribes the bitter and pungent carminatives (orange peel, angelica, calamus, caraway, dill, fennel, anise, centaury, and others). The damp, relaxed stomach is what we see in the baby—easy vomiting of the latest meal, complete with a batch of mucus. This needs astringents, to dry out the stomach—raspberry leaf, blackberry leaf, wild geranium. The torpid stomach lacks secretion of digestive juices and mucus. Nerve reflexes are torpid—there may be nausea, but there is no vomiting. The mucus adheres to the walls of the lining so there is less secretion and a need for cleansing bitters to wash off the walls and stimulate the bowels—goldenseal, yellow dock root, barberry root, Oregon grape root. The dry stomach is like the cold or torpid stomach in that there is a lack of secretion, gas builds up as a result, but here warming agents will not serve to turn the condition, since it is due to lack of moisture (secretions) and a weakness of the stomach muscles and nerves. Consider a moistener like marshmallow root, a moistening sweet tonic like anise seed, or bitters to stimulate gastric juices like

goldenseal and Oregon grape root. The tense stomach traps gas, like the dry one, but it needs relaxants and antispasmodics—chamomile, elder, fennel, dill, catnip, and the demon herb, lobelia.

Let us consider a more complex organ system, the cardiovascular tract. In aging the heart is affected through changes in the vessels. If the tongue is elongated, red, and shaped like a flame it is likely that the capillaries and vasculature are hot and prone to irritation, so that lots of LDL cholesterol will be laid down to repair the surface, followed by HDLs. If there is an imbalance in the heat of the capillaries or in the cholesterols there will be high blood pressure, arterial disease, and tendencies to heart attack and stroke. This is especially the area where hawthorn, or sometimes wild cherry bark, is required. (Sometimes the vasculature can be cooled through another system, say for instance through the GI tract by using yellow dock root or rhubarb root, which are not cardiac remedies at all. Galen called this a "consensual" relationship between organ systems, when one is being attacked by conditions in another, or where one is trying to protect the other. This type of holistic thinking is ignored in modern biomedicine.) If, on the other hand, the extremities are cold, the pulse low and slow, the tongue pale or dark, cold and depression may be affecting the vascular system. If there is blue coloration the blood is congealing. Heart attacks and strokes will occur through a different etiology. This condition needs stimulants such as cayenne, collinsonia, aesculus, angelica, madder, yarrow, and others. The heart can also be affected by relaxation in the vasculature that especially affected the veins. This used to be called "passive venous congestion," and was indicated by blood stagnation in the veins, hemorrhoids, varicosities, and other symptoms. Most of the remedies in the last category are beneficial here as well; also sumach, which is excellent for high blood pressure from this condition. Passive congestion can cause vascular tension through back pressure against the heart. Constriction or tension, psychological or physical, will also cause vascular problems and high blood pressure. Here think of the relaxants, but especially viscum, melissa, and the little-known liriodendron. High blood pressure is often caused by sympathetic excess, so remedies that

relax the sympathetic and reinforce the parasympathetic are beneficial, even if they are not “heart remedies.” High blood pressure that is caused by salt imbalance in the kidneys, or fluids of the body, should be treated by use of a naturally occurring, broad spectrum table salt—the red or gray salts, or flowers of salt. Also, marshmallow root and celery seed, the emollient or salty diuretics. Diuretics may be necessary—rosemary and dandelion leaf are famous for congestive heart failure, but the preceding two should also be considered.

And finally, let us examine a “system,” the condition of which affects the entire body, and the treatment for which can have repercussions throughout the entire system—the skin and mucosa—that is, the epithelial cells. The condition of the surface reflects everything that is going on in the interior. If the skin or mucosa is hot, red, swollen, and tender, there is heat and excitation with need for the cooling remedies—rose hips, peach leaf, hawthorn, wild cherry, elder, lemon, yarrow, and so on. If the skin is hot and dry consider elder. If it is hot and sticky in some places, from incomplete sweat, consider yarrow. If the mucosa is hot and dry consider peach leaf or marshmallow root. If the skin is dry the sweat pores are not open: marshmallow root, pleurisy root, elder, sage, and red clover. But the problem could also be from lack of the oily component of the sweat: burdock, angelica, sunflower seed, hawthorn. If the mucosa is dry: peach leaf and marshmallow. The former is for heat causing drying, the latter for drying causing heat —at least, that is what I think. If the skin is moist and cool with a watery sweat, the pores are stuck open: sumach (especially if there is a lot of urine) and monarda (especially if there is internal heat). The loss of cooling fluids is draining the system. If the skin is oily and sticky: burdock root. If there are night sweats, shivering, or periodic sweating there is an element of wind or tension: blue vervain, boneset, dogwood—the acrid bitter diaphoretics. Sage is beneficial for aging of the skin—dry or periodic sweating. If there is evidence of congealed blood or passive venous congestion, move the blood with arnica, yarrow, safflower, cayenne, angelica, collinsonia, aesculus, madder. If the skin is pale with evident blue veins there is

need for treatment of passive venous congestion: lady's mantle, feverfew. Pale and blue swelling: elder. If a person is sensitive to both heat and chill: an adaptogen—eleuthero, American spikenard. Turbidity or toxins in the blood show up on the skin as eczema, psoriasis, acne, and similar conditions. They show up on the mucosa and tongue as a heavy yellow or white coating. They indicate the use of blood cleansers and bitters. If there is abscess and pus on the surface we need the antiseptics (baptisia, echinacea, calendula, thuja) and lymphatic cleansers (calendula, thuja, ceanothus).

If we can correct the condition of the skin or mucosa, many other internal changes for the better will occur. The "condition of the surface" represents the "dragon tracks" left by earlier diseases as they plunged into the depths of the body.

We have not referred to the third category used by Galen and Culpeper to get to the right prescription. Culpeper calls this the "property," though the term "action" would more likely be used today. This category includes many different concepts, energetic, organ-specific, ancient, and modern. Use the "action" to further refine the picture given by the energetic and location of the disturbance (see this page-this page).

CHAPTER FOUR
Preparation and Dosage

Coming down to the first part of the nineteenth century, we find that purveyors of medicinal and savory herbs then wandered over the whole of England in quest of such useful Simples as were in constant demand at most houses for the medicine-chest, the store chest, or the toilet-table. These rustic practitioners of the healing art were known as "green men," who carried with them their portable apparatus for distilling essences, and for preparing their herbal extracts. In token of such functionaries having formerly officiated in this capacity, there may yet be seen in London, and elsewhere about the country, taverns bearing the curious sign of "The Green Man and (his) Still."

—DR. WILLIAM T. FERNIE (1914, 8)

Most herbals and pharmacopoeias have directions for preparation. We find them in the opening pages of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica*. I have not attempted a detailed discussion of preparation, but have included opinions and options I think are interesting. Generally, the following directions should be noted.

Preparation

Major methods of preparation are given by many different authors. Here are some of the general directions.

TEA

When making teas prepare only enough for one day. The material begins to break down as soon as it is wet. Teas are usually made from dried herbs but can be made from the fresh.

INFUSION

This is when the plant material is steeped in hot water, instead of being boiled. This is used for dried plant parts that are easily oxidized: flowers, leaves, powders. A usual method is to boil 32 parts of water and pour it over 1 part of dried herb and let stand for 10–60 minutes. Keep covered to prevent loss of volatile oils. Usual dose: 1–3 tablespoons, 3x/day. Do not keep for more than three days. Add honey, if desired.

COLD INFUSION

This is used when the plant material is broken down by heat. Let stand in room temperature water, for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight, 1 part plant material in 32 parts water. “It is a very efficient method and, as it uses no heat, the least altering to plant constituents of any tea process” (Michael Moore, 2003, 24).

DECOCTION

This is used when the plant material is thicker and harder so cooking is needed to break the material apart. Boil 1 part herb in 32 parts of water, with the lid on, for 1/2 to 1 hour, cool, and strain. Add honey, if desired.

PRESERVED PREPARATIONS

Fresh or dried plant material can be extracted in water and alcohol, and preserved in alcohol or vegetable glycerine. Different alcohols have different properties. A fellow student of mine at the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine, Rosari Kingston, studied the media used to extract and tincture herbs and found that there were no scientific tests establishing the differences between modern and traditional menstrua (ethanol and ether versus wine, brandy, whiskey, vodka,

and so on), or the concentrations to be used in most cases. There are, however, extensive studies by alcohol producers of the physiological effects and side effects of different kinds of alcohol, and they do differ from one to another. (This information may not be available to the public.)

Ethanol in the United States is made from corn; in Europe it is made from whey.

FRESH PLANT TINCTURE

This is an ideal way to preserve fresh plant material, although it is not the usual commercial method, which uses dried material, if not otherwise specified. A standard tincture is made from the fresh plant (1 part by weight) in ethanol, grain alcohol, or 95% alcohol (2 parts), macerated 7–9 days (Michael Moore).

High alcohol content is believed to extract more active ingredients, in most cases, but it also breaks down the constituents. A lower alcohol content (40–50%) does not extract as much, but preserves the molecules, hence the far more recognizable flavor and smell of such products. This is how I usually make tinctures, although there are exceptions. It is almost impossible to compare the beautiful taste of chamomile, cleavers, rosemary, or hawthorn prepared in this fashion to any other method. On the other hand, some fresh plants are too watery for the low alcohol method—here I think particularly of calendula, which should be dried.

William LeSassier called the fresh, low alcohol approach "energetic tinctures," a good name. (By the way, he did not like to use them, though he did not criticize me for using them.) I like this method because it preserves many subtle organic molecules that would be broken down by the scissors-like action of the alcohol. A friend, who made tinctures from the fresh plant in 40% alcohol (brandy, for best taste in most cases), had her products tested by the ATF. The markers were actually better than tinctures made from dry plants in higher alcohol extractions, much to the surprise of the ATF.

DRY PLANT TINCTURE

This is the usual commercial method, since it is hard for most herb companies, unless they have their own gardens, to have fresh herbs on hand. The plant material is weighed out exactly and compared to the alcohol and water used to extract and preserve it (like 5 parts to 1 part; 1:5). The best product is improved by percolation (see Michael Moore, 2003).

POULTICES, SALVES, AND OILS

Now let us look at several methods of external application. A poultice from the fresh leaves is made by chopping them up and putting them directly on the part. Leaves can be beat up between stones for this purpose. A compress is made by warming up an infusion or decoction, moistening a clean cloth in it, and placing on the body. A hot poultice is made the same way except that the plant parts are wrapped in the cloth and put on externally.

Herbs for external use are extracted in oil overnight, say in a double cooker at a low temperature or on a warm radiator. Tend the mixture at first to make sure the temperature doesn't boil over the product or make a mess. Olive oil and sesame oil are good, because they are medicinal in their own right and preserve well, but different oils have different properties. For instance, the most penetrating of all is skunk oil (that is, the lard not the scent), which can be applied to one side of the hand and come out the other. The most penetrating of the vegetable oils is grapeseed. Other oils keep the material in them on the surface—olive oil is more in this category. Sesame oil is nutritious, sunflower seed oil is detoxifying, safflower oil is blood-moving and thinning.

Some plant constituents extract better in oil and some worse, so that sometimes the extraction or tincture in alcohol is placed in the oil and boiled off—this is the case with St. John's wort. Once the oil is impregnated with the properties of the plant add wheat germ oil as a preservative (1 part to 7 parts) and wax to harden it up.

Essential oils may be added to improve scent or add medicinal properties.

Essential oils are different from oil extractions because they represent the pure essential or volatile oils taken from the plants and not adulterated. This is the material used in aromatherapy.

Dosage

No scientific standards for posology or dosage exist. All indications are based on theory, tradition, opinion, or individual experience. These include the oft-quoted dosages given in the *British Herbal Pharmacopoeia*. One of my fellow students at the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine, Mary Tassel, made inquiries into the origin of these guidelines and found that there were no records to show how the BHP dosages originated.

To repeat: there is no scientific basis for posology or dose. A more accurate approach would stress what herbalists do, rather than why they think their approach is more scientific or more effective. Thus, I have often recorded under preparation and dosage the practices of actual green men and green women. However, a few generalizations can be made.

Generally, the herbal field divides into two segments, the high dosers and the low dosers. The former tend to use preparations made from dried plants in a range of 20–60-drop doses, less if the plant is considered toxic. The low dosers tend to use preparations made from fresh plants in a range of 1–10 drops. These are sometimes called “Wood doses” after yours truly, though they were also used by the eclectics in the nineteenth century and others. Some people use both.

The idea behind high dosage practice in herbalism is that the physical constituents of the plant act on the body in a mechanical fashion and a large amount is necessary to make an impact. Low dosage practice tends to be based on the concept that the preparation has a more “energetic” and less physical reaction on the body. The plant is seen as having an intelligence or virtue that acts

on the vital force or self-regulating system of the body to effect change.

Interestingly, the same division is found among homeopaths, except that here the high dosers are those who use the extreme dilutions (say, 1 part diluted a thousand times on a 1/100 scale) whereas the low dosers use drop doses or slight dilutions (say, 1 part diluted 6–30x on a 1/10 scale).

From the standpoint of material science, the use of the small doses does not seem reasonable. From the standpoint of energetic medicine, forcing the body to react, by using large doses, is not holistic or curative.

A further question arises as to whether the body reacts oppositely to large and small doses. In homeopathy the diluted medicine sometimes cures symptoms the opposite of the diluted drug. For instance, atropine (from *Atropa belladonna*) is used to relax sphincters and muscles in conventional medicine while *Belladonna* (from *Atropa belladonna*) is used in homeopathic dilution for conditions where the sphincters and muscles are overly relaxed.

The problem with extending homeopathic thinking to herbalism is that most of the medicines that display opposite properties are poisons. Most of the herbal remedies, on the other hand, are made from common, nontoxic herbs—*Eupatorium perfoliatum, Hypericum perforatum, Sambucus nigra, Chamomilla matricaria*, and so on. These actually have the same effects in both herbal and homeopathic preparation, as a comparison of an herbal with a homeopathic materia medica would show.

There are instances where herbs can be better directed by the use of large or small doses. For instance, there is no reason to give large doses of yellow dock to someone with diarrhea. The plant contains both tannins and anthraquinone laxatives, so it acts both on diarrhea and constipation, but large doses would aggravate the diarrhea unnecessarily.

Where it has been possible, the posology used by the eclectic medical movement has been given in this herbal, since the eclectics used both high and low dosages. A good source here is John William Fyfe's *Specific Diagnosis and Specific Medication* (1909), which I have

quoted whenever available. Fyfe, for example, gives the dosage of 1–60 drops for *Vitex*. I have sometimes given my own posology where I have extensive experience with an herb.

According to Graeme Tobyn (1997), Nicholas Culpeper, the progenitor of English language herbalism, taught an interesting posological principle that is very much worth reprinting. Culpeper was of the opinion that less of the plant was needed when it was being used to treat internal, central functions, but more was needed when treating those that lie in the periphery, farther from the governing heat and intelligence in the core of the body. (This may have a basis in Greek medicine.)

This doctrine agrees generally to my approach. It takes very little amount of herb or "plant intelligence" to influence the core intelligence of the organism, but much to influence functions and parts that are more material. I have long used medium to large doses when there were deposits of material in the body that had to be moved, because these are not "energetic" but material. Even more so, when foreign processes like cancer at are work there is an alien intelligence actively opposing the innate intelligence of the body. In these cases, large doses (20–35 drops) are required.

However, in my opinion, large doses should always be fractionated, or taken over a period of time (60 drops over 1–10 minutes) because organic tissues probably become "cloyed"—too full of a material to absorb more. This is my one and only concern with large doses. I do not care whether people use them or not, as long as the dose is somewhat fractionated to prevent cloying.

In conclusion, I use small doses (1–10 drops) in "energetic" disturbances involving the core intelligence of the body, infinitesimal (homeopathic) doses when poisonous plants are involved, and "material" doses (10–35 drops) when there is material to be moved or cancer is involved. Sometimes I simply follow the directions of the person or source that taught me, because they are my "elder" or mentor, and I treat them with respect.

PART II

Materia Medica

I open all the drawers and cases of my apotheca, and let every one look into them, even to the last little tea-box and the smallest oil bottle.

—SEBASTIAN KNEIPP (1898, 148)

Using the Materia Medica

One of the most perplexing features of traditional—and regular—therapy is why so many seemingly diverse uses have been recorded for medicinal plants.

—JOHN CRELLIN AND JANE PHILPOTT (1990, 11)

The Earthwise Herbal has been written to bring out the underlying unity behind the actions of a plant so that its application is not, as the above authors comment, "perplexing." It aspires to be "complete," as the subtitle brags, in terms of the depth in which each plant is examined. It also aspires to relative completion in terms of the scope of traditional literature searched in its production. The selection of plants covers nearly all nontoxic medicinal herbs used in traditional Western herbalism. Space limits this volume to Old World plants only—there will be another volume on materia medica of the New World. *The Earthwise Herbal* is less comprehensive in its coverage of plants introduced within the last twenty years. The emphasis has been placed upon traditional materials of medicine. As a formulary, or workbook for the clinic, it is also less complete. No coverage of compounding has been undertaken, and the dosages given are suggestive.

The herbal is laid out in the following manner.

LATIN BINOMIAL (GENUS AND SPECIES). COMMON NAMES.

I have sometimes used older Latin binomials when I felt that the original names are important. Botanists rename plants for their own convenience, not for herbalists, horticulturists, or pharmacists. I do

not feel we need to follow botanists slavishly, but I also have tried to indicate the modern name, if it differs from the Latin binomial I have used.

NATURAL HISTORY, PLANT FAMILY, HISTORICAL AND GENERAL BACKGROUND, PHARMACOLOGY

Rather than crowding up the description of plant properties and uses with excess information, I have included a separate section, in italics, to provide the milieu of the plant.

THE ESSENCE, NATURE, LOGIC, PROPERTIES, AND USES OF THE PLANT

The main body of the text consists of a description of the plant uniting its diverse properties and uses into a whole profile that makes sense, empirically, intuitively, and pharmacologically. The greatest effort has been made to bring out the essential nature, personality, or logic of the plant. When this is understood the disparate traditional uses, modern uses, and physical properties usually form a unit that makes sense. Some case histories and anecdotes have been included to illustrate application and give the text some interest.

The reader has a right to know how many plants the author has actually used in practice, and how many he dares to write about without the basis of personal experience. I have not indicated this anywhere in the text, but most of the long accounts, commonly used herbs, and certainly all those in which I cite myself as a source have been used in my practice. There is another group of plants that I feel I know well because friends have filled me in on their experiences, and I trust and understand their methods. In a work of this magnitude there must be some herbs I have used but little or not at all. However, after more than twenty-five years of clinical experience and continuous study, always searching for the core essence of plants, my understanding of them has developed to such

a degree that I write confidently even about plants I have yet to meet. I also have developed an eye for the literature, often quoting sources who clearly did understand their subject, while avoiding others who wrote without experience.

Young herbalists should know that the day will come when they will be able to look through the materia medica and it will simply make sense, because signatures, tastes, and constituents do correctly indicate uses, and the pieces integrate into whole pictures with definite properties.

TASTE

The following template has been used: flavor • temperature and humidity • impression. As used here, the word taste includes the flavor, temperature (hot, cold), humidity (damp, dry), and impression made on the nervous system (diffusive, etc.). These properties often give us the best indications for the "energetics" or tissue state favored by the medicine.

I have done the best I could with plant tastes, working from experience. Out of habit and love of herbs, I taste virtually every formula or simple I give out and every plant I stop to seriously look at in the field or garden. On occasion I have quoted from some other author—this is always indicated. Yet, the sense of taste is subjective and I do not hold myself out to be especially keen in this area. I have been corrected in the past, and if the reader knows the taste more perfectly than the author, please correct me.

TISSUE STATES

This follows the template: excitation (irritation, overstimulation), tension (constriction), atrophy, relaxation, stagnation, depression.

Each herb acts on a particular tissue state or combination of states.

ORGAN AFFINITIES

Originally, this was a separate category, but I have worked organ affinities into the arrangement of specific indications. Thus, there are now headings lumping symptoms under location, organ, system, and sometimes constitution. Strong organ affinities are italicized.

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

These are the collection of symptoms and indications that come down to us in the literature or from the personal experience of practicing herbalists. Symptoms that are "poorly developed" (like "diarrhea") are listed, but an effort has been made to collect and develop more detailed symptoms or "specific indications." For instance, sometimes we just have "gastritis." This is not a specific indication, but it is the best we have. With more experience we have more definition: "gastritis; gurgling, nausea, mucus in vomitus," or "gastritis; with liver involvement," and so forth. A fully developed specific indication is so detailed that it leads to the selection of a small number of remedies or even just a single medicine. At this level the specific indication not only contains detail, but it tends to indicate the specific affinities in tissue state and organ that characterize the plant. For instance, "gastritis; gurgling, nausea, mucus in vomitus" indicates an astringent.

Of least value are the names of illnesses: "diabetes." What kind of diabetes? Yet, we must include even these indications, nonspecific as they are, because the account would be incomplete without them.

When an indication is italicized it may be taken to be particularly characteristic and reliable, or often proven by experience.

David Winston, registered herbalist (AHG), makes it a point not to include new indications unless they have been tried out in practice more than twenty times. I set more liberal standards. If a newly discovered usage makes sense, in keeping with the general logic of the plant, and has been verified a half dozen times, it will be included. A few suggestive indications that have not been proved

out in practice are included from time to time because they ought to be investigated more fully. The only symptoms taken over from traditional literature that I have thrown out are those where a mistake in the transmission of information is apparent and the symptoms clearly do not belong to the remedy.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE

It was not my intention to write a formulary, or workbook giving specific preparation methods, formulations, and standard dosages. I have instead merely handed on a collection of notes on preparation from my own or others' experience that should prove useful and may, in the future, provide material for a formulary. For a good contemporary formulary refer to Richo Cech, *Making Plant Medicine* (2000). I do not feel that it is a good idea to copy the United States Pharmacopeia or National Formulary slavishly. Herbs are like condiments; they can be prepared in subtle, beautiful, and almost countless ways.

The standard of dosages given in this book is highly variable. My favorite source of posology (dosage) is John William Fyfe (1909). This is because he gives advice on dosage like: "1 to 60 drops." I personally use small doses, but I do not advocate small or large dosages for other practitioners. I simply use what works for me. Some herbalists dismiss my work as homeopathic rather than herbal, because they mistakenly think the effect changes with small or large doses. This is only true for poisons, which are harmful in large doses and toxic in small ones. *The Earthwise Herbal* is limited to nontoxic herbs. People who are doctrinaire about posology miss the main point: the healing virtue is in the plant, not the preparation or amount. What works best is the dosage level a practitioner feels comfortable with, rather than a doctrinal position.

CONTRAINDICATIONS, CAUTIONS, TOXICITY

This section has been included when necessary.

LITERATURE

Throughout *The Earthwise Herbal* I have attempted to give credit for original work, quotations, and case histories. In the "monograph," or main body of the text under each herb, credit is indicated by the usual methods: quotation marks, sources, dates, and pages. In the section on "Specific Indications" the sources for symptoms are given at the end of the account of the herb, under "Literature." The numbers following the authors represent the symptoms they contributed to, counting down from the top under "Specific Indications." Dates and page numbers here have been ignored—one will have to turn to the reference section to find the original book or lecture, and then to the index of that book to find the plant and the symptom. Some undated references refer to conversations or class notes that I saved on bits of paper or by memory and could not include in the References section.

Confirmation of an important or unusual symptom is often noted in the text with the symptom number followed by "-confirmed."

Acacia senegal. Acacia, Gum Arabic.

This small tree in the legume family is native to North Africa and the Middle East. A gum is exuded from the tree that has been used since antiquity both as a curative remedy and a carrier for other agents. It is collected by Bedouin tribes who use it as a food, medicine, and trade item. In addition to the gum, there are small amounts of sugar and mineral ash including calcium, magnesium, and potassium. It is so nutritious that during the harvest the Bedouin can live off the gum alone.

Acacia is a good example of a fairly nonspecific herb that is used in a broad fashion as a mucilage and emollient for a wide variety of conditions in which other such agents could be substituted fairly indiscriminately. It is, therefore, not the kind of medicinal plant well suited to the present book, where the emphasis is on specific uses. However, it still serves as a good teaching example because a

careful reading of traditional herbal literature does bring out some specific uses, demonstrating that even a plant with general properties can be used in a specific fashion. Notice the allopath John Eberle's comment about it being "peculiarly beneficial" in the bowel complaints of children. That is a good example of a "specific indication."

The mucilaginous and emollient constituents of acacia are released by boiling, straining, and made into a soothing application for irritations to the skin and mucous membranes. Gum acacia is commonly used as a syrup to coat and soothe the windpipe and digestive tract. Because it is adhesive and viscid, it helps to keep poultices on the surface, while retaining moisture and warmth. It is also applied as a binder and coating for pills and tablets and to suspend water insoluble substances in a liquid form. It has even been used in paints and glues as a polishing and adhesive substance.

Gum acacia is used externally on burns, painful nipples from nursing, and inflammation of the skin. It is used internally on inflamed mucosa of the throat, windpipe, lungs, and gastrointestinal tract. The gum is beneficial in coughs, catarrh that needs to be loosened and raised, inflammation of the bowels, and diarrhea. "In the chronic bowel complaints of children it is peculiarly beneficial," wrote Dr. John Eberle, of Philadelphia (1834, 2:456). "I have prescribed it with complete success in such cases, after a variety of other remedies had been tried ineffectually." In one case, "a little patient [was] restored to health by this treatment alone, after the case appeared to be hopeless." In the past, many children died from chronic diarrhea.

Before the advent of intravenous feeding, gum arabic served an important purpose. "In acute disease, where it becomes necessary to use the lightest and most readily digested food, there is no article, probably equal to gum arabic" (King, 1898, I:10).

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MUCOSA AND SKIN

- Oral plaque, periosteal disease (oral preparation).
- Skin irritations, inflammation, burns (external).

RESPIRATION

- Laryngitis, hoarseness.
- Inflammation of the respiratory tract, irritable cough, catarrh (cough drops).
- "Coughs depending on irritation in the fauces or glottis."
- "Coughs from a thin sharp rheum."
- Adhesive phlegm in the throat and bronchia.

DIGESTION

- Nutrient in malarial cachexia.
- Gastritis.
- Diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid.
- Tenesmus and painful passage of stool.
- *Specific for chronic dysentery in children*.

CIRCULATION

- High cholesterol.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Kidney failure; reduces urea in the blood (cf. *Urtica*).
- Strangury, difficulty passing urine.
- Gonorrheal discharge.

FEMALE

- Sore nipples from nursing (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Macerate 4 ounces of gum arabic in 4 fluid ounces glycerine and 8 fluid ounces water. Let stand, stir from time to time, until it is dissolved. This method, which yields a pint, retards the formation of acetic acid that occurs when only water is used (Shook, 1978, 37).

CAUTIONS:

History of food usage. Long considered safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16), Edward Shook, John King (2, 3, 11, 12), Christopher Menzies-Trull, John Eberle (5, 11, 15, 16), Ben Charles Harris (7), John Hill (6, 15), Hakim Chishti (3, 9).

Achillea millefolium. Yarrow.

Yarrow is native to the Old World *(A. millefolium* var. *millefolium)* and the New *(A. millefolium* var. *lanulosa)*. Although it is somewhat more widely documented from European sources, I have included it in *The Earthwise Herbal* under American plants, mostly for space considerations.

Aegopodium podagraria. Goutweed, Bishop's Wort, Herb Gerard.

Goutweed is a member of the parsley family native to Europe, widely grown as an ornamental and naturalized throughout the temperate regions, but seldom used in modern herbalism. It was once important enough to be planted in the monastery herb gardens and was called "herb Gerard" after the patron saint of gout-healing. Although seldom described by modern herbalists, a good account is rendered by an "herbal journalist," Audrey Wynne Hatfield (1973, 90). The following is quoted from her account.

“Goutwort acts on the kidneys and bladder, stimulating the discharge of urine to flush away poisoning secretions which can be the hidden cause of many aches and pains, gravel and skin disorders. It is sedative and it eases pain. Taken internally, the tea infusion can successfully cope with aching joints, rheumatic pains, gout, and sciatica.” These are the most common traditional uses. Hatfield rewards us with some personal experience. “I have known cases of eczema that for years have defied other treatments, to be completely cured in a few weeks by the daily drinking of a half a pint of the tea. This has been infused with 2 or 3 good leaves of goutwort and 4 dandelion leaves, with a pint of boiling water.” By itself the dose is 3–4 fresh leaves per infusion, taken in wineglassful doses. “Externally, the roots and leaves boiled together and applied to the hip as a fomentation, renewed occasionally, will give wonderful relief in some cases of sciatica.”

A few additional indications can be gleaned from the literature. Goutweed is often found around old monastic ruins, testimony to its onetime use in medicine. Gout was originally considered a “rich man’s disease”—that is, a disease of the aristocrats of church and state. In the *Physica* Hildegard von Bingen (1998, 74) says that goutweed is effective for stomach pain. Culpeper (1653) notes that it abates unnaturally high color, making a person more pale or less red. “It is not to be supposed that goutweed hath its name for nothing,” he comments.

Aesculus hippocastanum. Horse Chestnut.

Horse chestnut is a medium sized tree native to Western Asia but naturalized in Europe and now in the western hemisphere, where it has several cousins such as Ohio buckeye (Aesculus glabra). *The nuts are mildly toxic but have long been used in folk medicine for the treatment of hemorrhoids and varicose veins. They also make an excellent liniment for muscle spasms in horses, hence the name “horse chestnut.” It is not related to the true chestnut* (Castanea) *but is in the Sapindaceae family. Much work has been done with the horse chestnut in nineteenth-century*

botanical medicine, twentieth-century pharmacology, and homeopathy. Dr. Bach, of flower essence fame, used it under the name white chestnut. It contains flavonoids, tannins, fatty acids, sterols, triterpene saponin glycosides (3–6%) in a complex called "aescin," and coumarins.

Aesculus is most famous as a specific for hemorrhoids. "Two or three drops, with a spoonful of water, taken before meals and at bedtime, will cure almost any simple case of piles in a week," writes Dr. W. T. Fernie (1914, 97), a reputable author, of the tincture. If we understand the processes behind the formation of hemorrhoids, we can grasp many additional functions to which horse chestnut is remedial.

Horse chestnut was one of the classic remedies for "passive venous congestion" (William Boericke, 1927). This describes a state where the veins are distended and full, with blood collecting in them, so that there is poor return circulation from the feet, varicosities and even phlebitis in the legs, pelvic and uterine congestion, hemorrhoids, backing up of blood through the portal vein to the liver, which may be congested and full, and up the veins to the right or venous side of the heart. The stasis of blood in the venous side of the vascular system causes the heart to have to pump against this pressure, resulting in high blood pressure and dilatation and weakening of the right side of the heart. There may be asthma from stasis in the pulmonary veins. Horse chestnut is indicated for hemorrhoids, varicosities of the legs, phlebitis, thrombosis, swollen liver, portal stagnation, distention of the right side of the heart, high blood pressure, and asthma, when the characteristic mental and pulse symptoms are present. It contains tannins, coumarins, and triterpene glycosides that tone the veins, thin the blood, stimulate the circulation, and relieve the heart.

Aesculus hippocastanum is a top notch remedy for obsessive and compulsive thinking, as if one were chased by one's own thoughts, round and round, and had no control over them. This indication comes from Edward Bach but I have seen it confirmed in homeopathic and herbal dosages. It is as if there were not enough

room between the thoughts. The problem shows up in the pulse, which feels as if there is not enough room or rest between the beats, which bound up to the surface, like a stag jumping over a fence. The bound-up pulse of *Aesculus* indicates mental tension, blood being held back under pressure, and often indeed, high blood pressure, for which this remedy has long been used. However, it can only be used successfully for hypertension when indicated by specific symptoms.

One time a woman came to see me who was suffering from glaucoma. She had a bounding pulse with a lack of space between the beats so I asked a few questions. Yes, she had obsessive/compulsive thinking, insomnia ("I haven't slept in six months"), and hemorrhoids. *Aesculus hippocastanum* 12x homeopathy brought a flood of tears to her dry eyes and rapid elimination of the glaucoma. This condition, in her case, was evidently due to venous congestion in the eyes. Remember, glaucoma should be treated like a "high blood pressure of the eyes."

Rudolf Steiner (1975, 221) recommended a mild aqueous dilution of the husks of the horse chestnut to help mineralize the teeth. "The juice of the horse-chestnut contains something of the same principle as that which builds up our teeth. There is always some substances out in the macrocosm with an internal organizing effect." *Aesculus* is therefore analogous to white oak bark—both are for varicose veins and mineralization of the teeth. They are also analogous to calcium fluoride, used in homeopathy to tighten varicose veins and build the teeth. Astringents have a mineralizing effect because they stop the outflow of fluids that carry away electrolytes.

Aesculus is a pungent/stimulating astringent like *Collinsonia*—another great hemorrhoid, vein, and heart remedy. They are often used in combination. A common formula would add *Hamamelis*.

TASTE:

pungent • warm, dry • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

relaxation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- *Passive venous congestion.*

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Obsessive/compulsive thinking; thoughts go round and round; feels persecuted by his own thoughts; no down time from the mind; insomnia.*

HEAD

- Headache.
- Glaucoma (one case only).

RESPIRATION

- Asthma, associated with hemorrhoids and rectal fullness.

DIGESTION

- Dyspepsia, associated with hemorrhoids and rectal stasis.
- *"Congestion of the colon, rectum, and the entire pelvic viscera."*

LIVER

- Swollen liver; uneasiness, fullness, aching, throbbing; associated with portal and rectal engorgement.

HEART, CIRCULATION, AND BLOOD

- Pulse tense, not enough space or time between beats.
- High blood pressure.
- Hemorrhoids; large and purple; rarely bleed; sense of fullness.
- Phlebitis.
- Varicose veins, ulcerations, edema, eczema.

- Hemangioma (cf. *Salvia, Sambucus*).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Backache associated with hemorrhoids, rectal fullness.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Internal use: homeopathic or flower essence. Tincture: 5–15 drops (Fyfe), 20 drops adult dose, twice a day (de Vries). Long-term use advisable (John Scudder, Jan de Vries). External use: salve, ointment, cream.

CAUTIONS:

Cautions for those on blood thinning drugs. Not to be used internally in large doses.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Edward Bach (2), J. Compton Burnett, Matthew Wood (2-confirmed, 4, 9, 12), William Boericke (1), John Scudder (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14), John William Fyfe (7), David Winston (13), modern research (10).

Agathosma betulina. Buchu.

This is the newer binomial for buchu; see under *Barosma betulina*.

Agrimonia eupatoria, A. gryposepala. Agrimony.

Agrimony is a member of the rose family native to temperate regions of the globe. It has a history of moderate use in Europe, China, and North America. It has properties similar to its close cousin cinquefoil (Potentilla spp.). *The latter was generally more popular in folk medicine due to the resemblance the five leaves have to the fingers. Both* Agrimonia *and* Potentilla *are astringents that improve tissue tone, but they have also been used to relieve tension—both were used for the tense intermittent chills of malaria back to the time of Dioscorides. They can be used fairly interchangeably. It is in tension that their properties manifest most completely. Agrimony contains tannins, flavonoids, coumarins, polysaccharides, small amounts of glycosidal bitters, and minerals (including silicon). The American species* (A. gryposepala) *can be substituted for the European—I think it is a little more sweet and aromatic than the European.*

“Agrimony is a simple well known to all country folk, and abundant through England in the fields and woods, as a popular domestic medicinal herb,” writes Dr. W. T. Fernie (1914, 18). “Its use in the cottage for gargles, and as an astringent application to indolent wounds, is well justified.” It is best known as a specific for diarrhea and bedwetting, applications that carry over into modern British herbalism. However, this ancient simple is for so much more than this. It is, as Plinius wrote, an herb of “princely authoritie.”

Agrimony is a superlative remedy for tension. This indication, originated by Dr. Edward Bach, holds true on both the mental and physical levels, for both the flower essence and the herbal preparation. It is for the person who tries to hide his or her tension behind a false facade of suave sophistication or cheerfulness. He denies the pain with a smile. The phrase “torturedly cheerful” is expressive of the appearance. In other instances, agrimony people like speed and danger to escape from their pain (Bach). Such activities push the agrimony person into an excess sympathetic condition that masks the deeper pain and gets them stuck there. Bach also says there can be abuse of drugs, alcohol, and stimulants to escape the pain. The problem often revolves around business and hierarchical relations (employee/employer). The person feels “caught in a bind.”

Agrimony is a specific in any condition where the person holds the breath to stop the pain. This causes the release of endorphins—the body’s own opiates—which suppress pain. Agrimony people need to learn to “breathe through” the pain. As a consequence, the respiratory apparatus is affected. Agrimony is suited to conditions where the person is “tortured to capture the breath,” as Dr. Bach noted. “Agrimonia exerts a specific influence upon mucous membranes, checking profuse secretion and favoring normal activity. This action has suggested its usefulness in chronic bronchitis and in phthisis” (John William Fyfe, 1909, 355). Samuel Henry (1814, 12) treats us to a case history. “I knew a man at Flat brook, near Sussex [New Jersey], who informed me that he had spent near three hundred pounds with Dr. Kanady, without receiving any benefit; but by drinking the decoction of agrimony

root … was perfectly cured of his asthmatic complaint." Dr. J. V. Cerney (1976) also used agrimony root for bronchitis. He mentions a child with unstoppable coughing, night and day, until he turned blue, who was cured with agrimony root. I have several times used agrimony leaf with success for bronchitis and asthma, or for conditions elsewhere in the body that cause the person to hold the breath to stop the pain.

One would think that as an astringent agrimony is purely for relaxation, and hence for diarrhea and excessive urination, as it has been traditionally used. However, David Hoffmann provides the context. For example, he says that agrimony is suited to problems when they arise in children who are having trouble with toilet training. So there is tension combined with symptoms of relaxation.

As an astringent, agrimony has been used for all sorts of digestive problems, but it is suited to those where tension and relaxation combine to cause incorrect timing of functions. This element of the picture is developed by Dorothy Hall (1988, 78). It is suited to diarrhea, as are all astringents, but especially to cases where there are loose, floating stools with fats in them due to irregular or deficient discharges of bile and poor digestion of fats and oils. Acting further back up into the hepatic apparatus, it is good for hepatitis and cirrhosis from chronic alcoholism or food poisoning, with faulty fat metabolism, and irregular expulsion of bile. There may be ulceration of the bowels, blood in the stool, and bloody hemorrhoids.

Circulation to the liver, gallbladder, and gastrointestinal are off so that the hepatic cells do not receive the correct amount of "life-giving" arterial blood when they receive the dose of toxin laden blood from the portal vein and the intestines—at least, this is my picture of the situation. Consequently, there are liver problems, allergies, skin rashes and wasting (due to poor liver anabolism and catabolism of proteins and fats). Scudder notes that there is cirrhosis beginning in the lower parts of the liver, where the input of blood from the hepatic artery is less direct. Tension and suppressed anger are emotions associated with the liver and gallbladder, East and

West. “I have found it helpful against liver disorders, especially jaundice” (Donald Law, 1973, 26).

Agrimony acts strongly on the kidneys, a situation Dorothy Hall attributes to the presence of silica in the plant. The leaves “are found by experience to be good in the diabetes and incontinence of urine” (John Hill, 1740, 55). Peter Smith, an “Indian doctor” in Ohio, considered it indicated for incontinence following the passage of stones. Dr. John Scudder writes, “Given a pain in the region of the kidneys, and I always think of agrimonia as the remedy. In my practice I have seen wonderful results from it, in cases of months’ and years’ duration, and when everything had failed. I have found other uses for it, but this has been so prominent that I always associate the medicine and the position of the pain.” He considered it specific in “pointing pains” in the kidneys, from any cause.

“Among neuralgias, nephralgia is one of the severest. It is torture that might be borne for an hour or a day; but continued night and day for a fortnight or a month, the sufferer may well pray for relief or death. It varies in cause, in some a well-defined lithemia [stones], in others there is absolutely nothing to be determined wrong with the urine.”

“It is one of those singular remedies that follow the specific indications sharply; and the indication is, pain in the region of the kidneys, especially of the right side” (Scudder, quoted by Fyfe, 1909, 355–56).

Agrimony helps relieve the pain accompanying passage of gravel. Peter Smith (1812) used it for leaky bladder following the passage of kidney stones—here we see perfectly the idea of an astringent used for problems caused by tension. It is also for weakness from tension (Matthew Wood). “Strengthening in case of weakness” (Donald Law, 1973, 103). John Wesley (1791) recommended agrimony tea at breakfast for three months to prevent the return of kidney stones.

One of my students found it very unpleasant to pick agrimony because it produced symptoms she called *soroche* (Spanish for altitude sickness). “You feel really tired, like you want to be lower—like from the bed to the floor. Your digestion just stops. You get a

queasy/nauseous feeling. Gas builds up, but you might get diarrhea." These were the symptoms of *soroche* and, for her, exposure to agrimony, so this may be a remedy for altitude sickness.

TASTE:

(before flowering) mildly sweet, sour • astringent (after flowering) increasingly astringent

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, relaxation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Mental tension;* feels caught in a bind, "torturedly cheerful," hides anger and frustration behind an artificial facade; suave but inwardly tortured.
- *Work-related tension; employer-employee tension*.
- *Holds the breath to suppress the pain*.
- Resorts to drugs, alcohol, speed, and danger to suppress emotions; "sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll" (Julia Graves).
- *Tense, wiry pulse*.

HEAD

- Tension headaches.
- Slight yellow/gray complexion.
- Allergic welts associated with tension.
- Hardened ear wax (warm infusion in the ear).
- Ulcerations of the tongue, sores in the mouth, aphthae.

RESPIRATION

- Pharyngitis.
- Tonsillitis, relaxed throat (with *Salvia*).

- Respiratory problems; whooping cough, bronchitis, asthma; “tortured to capture the breath”; holds the breath.
- Catarrhal flow.

DIGESTION

- Low appetite.
- Ulceration of the gastrointestinal tract: tongue, mouth, stomach, intestines.
- Difficulty with fat digestion and metabolism.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea with griping and spasms; bellyache from spasms anywhere, especially guts.
- Constipation suddenly followed by diarrhea.
- Loose, fatty, floating stools; undigested food, large lumps, nuts, proteins in the stool.
- Food poisoning, amebic dysentery, gastroenteritis; doesn’t kill the microorganisms but tones the bowels (cf. *Rubus*).
- Mucus colitis.
- “Appendicitis”; traditionally used in British herbalism for low-grade irritation; may actually be cases of ileo-cecal irritation.

LIVER

- Hepatitis, cirrhosis, hepatic atrophy, jaundice.
- Tension and pain during the passage of a gall- or kidney-stone; blue, purple tongue, wiry pulse, and holding of the breath to stop the pain.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Atonic conditions of the urinary apparatus, and where the urine is thick and gelatinous.
- *Pointing pains in the kidneys;* with or without the passage of stones, in various kinds of urinary problems.
- Urinary tract infections with severe pain.
- *Bedwetting and diarrhea; in children* suffering anxiety about toilet training.
- Incontinence in the elderly; after passing stones.

- Edema with welts, coming and going suddenly.
- Acid urine, mild bladder and urethral inflammation; especially with dull pain in the lower back and flank (tea).

FEMALE

- Menstrual pain, cramps, and colic; hides the pain, pretends to be fine, composed.
- Vaginal ulceration.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Articular, spinal pain, acute and chronic; torturous; sprains and strains.

SKIN

- Ulceration on the labia, buttocks, legs.
- Skin rash, allergies, ulcers, psoriasis; with mental tension.
- Wounds, bruises, splinters; passive bleeding.

FEVER

- Influenza; intermittent chills and fever; with pain in the joints.

OTHER

- High LDLs and platelet aggregation (tea).
- Altitude sickness (?).
- Weakness from tension.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

It is best to pick the leaves off the sides of the stem, leaving the leader to go into seed, in early summer, before flowering. Harvested after flowering they are less sweet and more astringent (Matthew Wood). An old Southern manuscript notes that a “strong odor” is desirable (Moss, 1999, 169). This is true. Harvest from many different sites to ensure full range of properties (Dorothy Hall). Dose

of the tincture: 1–15 drops, 1–3x/day (Matthew Wood), or 1–2 drams to 4 ounces of water (Rolla Thomas).

CAUTIONS:

None known (German E Commission; Bisset and Wichtl, 1994).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (22, 27, 37), Edward Bach (1, 4, 11, 31), Matthew Wood (1–8, 10, 13, 21, 25, 29–31, 33–37, 39, 42), Julia Graves (1, 3, 4, 6, 16, 18, 30), Samuel Henry (13, 27, 37), John Scudder (21, 27), Finley Ellingwood (10, 16, 24, 28, 33), Michael Moore (32, 40), David Hoffmann (29), Jack Ritchason (24), Dorothy Hall (4, 17–19, 21), Rolla Thomas (26), Christopher Menzies-Trull (9, 11, 12, 14, 16), John Hill (29–30), Dioscorides (39), W. T. Fernie (10, 12, 38), Thomas Easley (31-confirmed), Sarah Duncklee (41), Donald Law (42). An extensive account is given in Matthew Wood, *The Book of Herbal Wisdom.*

Agropyron repens, Triticum repens, Elymus repens. Couchgrass.

This plant is commonly called couchgrass in herbalism, but most gardeners would know it by the name quackgrass. These names come from the Anglo-Saxon qwice, *meaning "full of life" (as in the word "quickened" or Yorkshire dialect "wick"). This testifies to a very early usage of this grass as a food or medicine. The root was sometimes made into bread. Couchgrass was classified as* Triticum *by the older botanists, and appears under this name in the older herbal literature. Today it is called* Elymus, *but it was still* Agropyron *when I started writing* The Earthwise Herbal, *so I kept that name. It is almost impossible to keep up with botanists and their changing nomenclature; they have no regard for herbal or medical tradition. The roots are high in sugars,*

polysaccharides, mucilage, gums, acids, flavonoids, potassium, and silicon.

Couchgrass has been used as a remedy for heat and irritation of the kidneys and bladder from ancient times down to the present. The rhizomes are cool, moist, sweet, highly nutritious, and demulcent, so this is a remedy for dryness and atrophy. The silicon—all grasses rely on silica in their sheaths—makes it strengthening to the nervous system (Eli Jones) and urinary sphincters (Dorothy Hall). By increasing water passing through the renal tract it decreases heat and irritation. It is said to dilate the renal capillaries, thus allowing more water through and decongesting the kidneys. This effectively reduces heat and inflammation. Like most plants high in natural sugars couchgrass has the ability to control high blood sugar.

Ellingwood (1918) classified triticum as a "renal sedative." He says that it increases "the flow of the watery portion of the urine without to the same extent influencing the actual renal secretion." It does not cause the kidneys to work harder (filter more blood), but opens up the tubules to allow more water through. "It is bland, mild, unirritating, and is used whenever urine, having a high specific gravity, causes irritation of the kidneys or bladder, more especially of their mucous surfaces." It is also used to help pass gravel and stones and soothe the injured membranes as they pass. By dilating the renal tubules and opening up the flow of water, triticum also cleans out deposits of gravel in the tubules. It is thus an important remedy in passing gravel and stones—a general condition the old doctors called "lithemia." To continue with Ellingwood: "It will relieve the constant ache in the back, which is due to precipitation of the crystalline secreted products within the tubules of the kidneys by furnishing abundant water for their solution. It flushes the kidneys, as it were, to an admirable extent, when renal sand has accumulated within the pelvis. Under these circumstances it is one of our most useful remedies."

"Internal dosing with an infusion of the root of couch grass" is especially good for bladder troubles, stone, gravel, irritability, and

inflammation, writes Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 105). However, “this infusion is prepared differently from the standard method, the herb having to be simmered a full quarter-hour in the water.” She adds, “Couch-grass root possesses remarkable stone-dissolving properties.”

Couchgrass is one of the main grasses used by dogs to induce vomiting to relieve their head colds and stomach problems. Vomiting stimulates the vagus, which stimulates the respiratory tract—this is the same principle used in modern medicine (“nauseant expectorant”) to clear the lungs. The vagus also stimulates the vomiting reflex. For this reason couchgrass is sometimes called “dog grass.” I observed my little eight pound poodle/terrier use the couchgrass to expel a cold picked up from a dog visiting the day before. Pliny complains that dogs use a grass to cure themselves every day, right in front of people, but are so ungenerous as not to show us which grass it is! This is only one of numerous clues showing that Pliny was not an observer, but a bookworm. His grand tome, *The Natural History*, might better be called *The Unnatural History*.

TASTE:

sweet • moist • mucilaginous, fibrous

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, irritation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- *Always blowing the nose;* chronic catarrh, bronchitis.
- Sore throat, tonsillitis (combined with sage and pennyroyal).

DIGESTION

- Vomiting.
- Worms in children, kills and expels (combined with wormwood).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Jaundice.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- *Irritation of the urinary apparatus*.
- Aching in the back that accompanies stone formation.
- Pain and straining with urination.
- Prostatitis, acute and chronic; benign enlargement, strangury, hematuria.
- Passage of scanty, bloody urine.
- *Lack of free secretion from the kidneys*.
- Deposits of any kind: phosphates, uric acid, or calcium salts.
- Excessive irritability of the bladder from any cause.
- Incontinence, dribbling.
- Kidney disease with drain on the nervous system; enfeeblement, eyes bright, surrounded by contracted tissues.
- Albuminuria, glomerulonephritis; frequent and scanty urination, burning and scalding in the urinary tract, heavy dull aching pains in the region of the kidneys.

LYMPH/IMMUNE

- Lymphatics, swollen, chronic.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, gout, rheumatism.

SKIN

- Eczema, chronic, dry or wet.
- Ulcers, cuts, and wounds.

FEVER

- Use during fevers when the urine is dark and scanty and there is thirst.

OTHER

- High blood sugar.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The rhizomes can be collected while weeding the garden, dried and used as a tea, or prepared in alcohol. “This agent gives better results when given as an infusion” (Rolla Thomas). This is often the case with diuretics and nephritics. Decoction: 2 teaspoons per cup, simmer 10 minutes; 1 cup 3x/day. The tincture is better made from the fresh rhizomes. Dose: 5–60 drops (Fyfe). Juice: “crush the fresh rhizomes in a mortar and express through cheesecloth; or use a wheat grass juicer. Preserve with 25% vodka, or freeze in ice cube trays” (Rogers).

CAUTIONS:

History of food usage. Generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17), homeopathic (1), Finley Ellingwood (7, 10, 11, 12, 21), Eli Jones (15–16), John William Fyfe, Christopher Menzies-Trull (5, 16), Dorothy Hall, Robert Dale Rogers (1, 17, 19, 22), Chalid Ottway (2, 3, 4, 19).

Ajuga reptans. Bugle.

Bugle, a low, creeping member of the mint family, was once one of the most popular wound remedies in European herbalism. It qualifies as one

of the "most forgotten" vulneraries of the Middle Ages (Peter Holmes). Culpeper may be referred to for a summary of the older uses. Maude Grieve gives an account based upon the experience of herbalists still using it in the early twentieth century.

"In herbal treatment, an infusion of this plant is still considered very useful in arresting hemorrhages and is employed in coughs and spitting of blood in incipient consumption and also in some biliary disorders," writes Grieve (1931, 140). One of her sources, evidently a physiomedicalist, refers to its action in "lowering the pulse and lessening its frequency," and likens it to digitalis. This harkens back to the empirical use of digitalis to control fever, as well as heart conditions, before the action of digitalis was completely understood. "It allays irritation and cough, and equalizes the circulation." It is compared to a mild narcotic in its relaxant power. "It has also been considered good for the bad effects of excessive drinking."

John Hill (1740, 95) notes that the juice is "a very good diuretic."

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Relaxes the mind.

RESPIRATION

- Irritable cough.
- Pulmonary hemorrhage of tuberculosis.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallbladder congestion.

HEART AND CIRCULATION

- Lowers a superficial, elevated pulse, decreases its frequency, increases strength, and equalizes the circulation.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Hernia (external).

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- Bruises, cuts, lacerations, stab wounds, hematomas, ulcers.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Native to Europe but naturalized in North America. “The whole herb is gathered in May and early June, when the leaves are at their best, and dried.… A wine glassful of the infusion—made from 1 oz. of the dried herb to 1 pint of boiling water—being given frequently” (Grieve). Bugle was commonly made into a salve for use on external wounds.

CAUTIONS:

Members of the mint family are seldom toxic.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Nicholas Culpeper, Maude Grieve.

Alchemilla vulgaris, A. mollis, A. xanthochlora. Lady's Mantle.

This Old World remedy is a member of the rose family. It has an astringent and bitter taste, resembling aspirin, reflecting the presence of salicylates. Lady's mantle was one of the most popular woundworts of the Middle Ages, like the preceding remedy, but in the Renaissance its use as a female medicine replaced the earlier reputation as a woundwort. It is a unique plant that, though it has never been highly popular, has never been completely forgotten. The leaves preserve droplets of water well into the afternoon of a hot day, reminding one of a raincoat, hence the name "Lady's mantle." This also reminds us of the use of dew by the alchemists, giving rise to the name Alchemilla, *the "little alchemist," or as Elisabeth Brooke translates it, the "little magical one." The leaves also look like a lion's paw, hence another common name, "lionsfoot." The furred brown rhizomes rising out of the soil give rise to yet another interesting name, "bearsfoot." One can either read in the scientific*

literature that Alchemilla *contains tannins and salicylates, or one can determine this for oneself on the tongue*.

The leaves of lady's mantle generate and collect droplets of water, indicating that this plant has a particular relationship to the management and economy of water. This is confirmed by the presence of tannins and salicylates. The former control the outflow of excess water, while the latter thin the blood and increase flowability of fluids. Thus, alchemilla has long been used to absterge or drive water from tissues that are damp and weak. It strengthens fibers and brings them back together into a healthy, toned condition. Hence it is useful in poor tone of the pelvic floor, hernia, rectal tear, prolapse of the uterus, and uterine bleeding. It controls pain associated with damp wounds, menstruation, and rheumatism. It possesses a remarkable ability to bring together torn tissues, thus has proved efficacious in repairing torn eardrums, hernia, muscles, tooth extractions, and so forth. The author has confirmed these indications and uses in practice.

Lady's mantle was originally an important woundwort. We may guess, from its other applications and constituents, that it is indicated in fistulous, purulent discharges and infected passageways (ears, vagina) with pain. Later it came into folk use as an important female remedy. It lifts tissue and structures that have become bogged down: sagging breasts after lactation and abdominal tissue following childbirth. "The good women in the North of England apply the leaves to their breasts to make them recover their form after they have been swelled with milk" (Hill, 1740, 226).

Alchemilla is associated with relaxed tissues that need astringence. Because the veins are more prone to relaxation than the arteries—the latter have strong neuromuscular coats—there may be prominent blue veins. The blood is usually more watery when the tissues are relaxed due to the outflow of fluids, so the skin may be pale and damp with prominent blue veins. Salicylates tend to thin coagulated blood, also reducing venous stagnation and prominence. This gives the characteristic constitutional type: "pale, sensitive

women with prominent blue veins" (William LeSassier, confirmed Matthew Wood). This is the constitutional type that, according to the old empirical doctors, is prone to leucorrhea—for which lady's mantle has long been used.

Bisset and Wichtl (1994, 53) warn us that the female uses of *Alchemilla* are based on folk medicine—probably the doctrine of signatures—and are therefore not derived from sound scientific concepts. Thus, the German E Commission indications are limited to "mild, non-specific diarrhea."

TASTE:

bitter • cool, dry • astringent

TISSUE STATE:

relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- Pale, anemic, sensitive women with prominent blue veins and moist skin.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Female energy; reinforces, protects, and connects.
- Nervousness, agitation, insomnia, and mood swings.

HEAD

- Headache from congested blood, worse before the period.
- Conjunctivitis (external).
- Infections in deep tubes; ears, vagina; after tooth extractions.
- Perforated eardrum.
- Mouth sores and ulcers (mouthwash).
- Laryngitis (gargle).

DIGESTION

- Nausea and indigestion, especially after consumption of fats.
- “Specific in acute and epidemic diarrhea”; diarrhea of relaxed intestines.

HEART

- Strengthens heart muscles, walls, atria.
- Arteriosclerosis.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscles weak, relaxed; heart, abdominal walls, uterus, pelvic floor.
- Hernia.
- Anal fistula.

FEMALE

- Vaginitis, leucorrhea, yeast infection; especially in pale, anemic women.
- Leucorrhea; discharge yellow.
- Pruritus vulvae.
- Menstruation: dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea, menorrhagia, metrorrhagia.
- Menstrual bleeding profuse (symptomatic relief, not necessarily cure of the cause).
- Endometriosis, fibroids.
- Menopause, hot flashes.

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- Cuts; flaps of skin hanging loose; cuts and ulcers that have become fistulous, or discharge fluids and pus; encourages clotting in wounds.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

At present the leaves are the part used. They are picked in late spring and early summer, before flowering, when they are tender and green. Infusion of the dried leaves: 2 teaspoons to 1 cup, steep for 10–15 minutes, 3x/day. The tincture is made from dried herb at 1:5 in 25% alcohol, dosage: 2–4 ml, 3x/day. I use a tincture made from the fresh leaves at about 1:1, dosage: 3–25 drops, 1–3x/day.

"The root is the part most valuable," writes John Hill (1740, 226). "A decoction of it fresh taken up is an excellent remedy for the overflowings of the menses, for bloody-fluxes, and all other bleedings."

CAUTIONS:

None known (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (6–9, 11–12, 14–15, 20, 21), William LeSassier (1, 14), William Salmon (11, 12, 24), Maria Treben (12, 16), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (3, 5, 10, 13, 18, 20, 23), Matthew Wood (8, 22, 24; confirmed: 1, 2, 4, 6, 13–15), Julia Graves (2, 4, 19), Dorothy Hall (21), Christopher Menzies-Trull (6, 15–17, 24), David Hoffmann (9, 10).

Allium cepa. Onion.

This common member of the lily family is widely used as a food and was once almost as widely used in medicine. The Old World culinary onion is used in modern folk medicine; related alliums were used in North America by the Indian people, frequently in the same manner—as a topical stimulant and drawing agent. Onion contains volatile oils, sulphur, phosphorus, alkaline salts, phosphoric and acetic acids, phosphoric and calcium citrate, starch, sugar, mucilage, and fiber.

Onion is one of the many pungent, warming remedies found in the food/herb group of plants. It also has drawing powers. Hence, onion is used topically to draw out poisons, mucus, and pus. Chopped and roasted onions are spread on the chest as a stimulant in cases of bronchitis and pneumonia. They warm the chest, liquefy mucus, and stimulate the cough reflexes. A roasted slice is placed on the ear to draw out infection and ache. The onion should not be used fresh, topically, or it will burn the skin. “A syrup made from the juice with honey is an excellent medicine for old phlegmatic persons in cold weather, when their lungs are stuffed, and the breathing is hindered.” Raw onions increase the flow of urine, and are used in edema, increase perspiration (given in a hot soup), quicken the circulation, assist digestion, prolong and deepen sleep (eaten at night), and are “almost the best nervine” known, “no medicine being equally useful in cases of nervous prostration, or so quick to restore and tone up a jaded physical system” (Fernie, 1914, 193).

There is an old tradition, mentioned by Fernie, of hanging up onions in the house to prevent epidemic disease. He mentions a house in a district where cholera was present that escaped the disease, supposedly because of the onions hanging in the cottage. An elderly Dakota woman of my acquaintance, now deceased, remembered that her family escaped the dreadful flu epidemic of 1918 because they hung onions in the house. Another American Indian, who used onion to draw out malevolent influences, either physical or psychic, noted that it should be buried afterward. Fernie (1914) notes that the rotten part of an onion should never be eaten because it may have picked up something undesirable.

More subtle uses are brought out in the homeopathic provings. *Allium cepa* (red onion) has produced “melancholy and depression, with severe catarrh” (Fernie, 1914, 196). Consequently, it is specific in small doses for head cold with running, clear phlegm that irritates the nostrils, with nonirritating tears in the eyes. It is a good remedy for social alienation, loneliness, and shock—“nobody will play with me.” Sore throat, torn, broken up feeling in the throat, as if one wanted to cry. For these homeopathic indications just cut a piece of raw onion into a glass, stir, and drink.

TASTE:

pungent, sweet, salty • warm, moist • stimulating

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Depression, sadness.
- Chronic or acute social alienation; “nobody wants to play with me”; shock from accidents, financial setback, social or familial loss.

RESPIRATION

- *Tearful eyes, watery, sneezy, irritating discharge from the nose, with social alienation.*
- Head colds with sneezing, irritation around the nostrils.
- Earache (put a slice of roasted onion to the ear).
- Sore throat, feeling as if torn, broken, as if one wanted to cry.
- Impacted mucus in the lungs, threatening or developed pneumonia (poultice of chopped roasted onions on the chest).

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- *Drawing agent* (externally, upper half of a roasted onion on boil, bruise, bite, wound, and so on).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Red onion is more stimulating, yellow or white onions more sweet, so the former is preferred in the above symptoms where a stimulant is needed. Chop a piece into a glass of water and sip for upper respiratory problems. Use fresh to prevent loss of the volatile oil.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (5, 7), homeopathic provings (1, 3, 4, 6), Matthew Wood (2, 6), W. T. Fernie (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8).

Allium sativum. Garlic.

Garlic is one of the most important, widely known, and universally applicable of all medicinal plants in the Old World pharmacopoeia. John Heinerman showed that it was widely used in ancient Sumeria, and is thus one of the most ancient medicines in the world. He adds that it is still a widely used folk medicine in Iraq. Galen called garlic theriaka rusticana *(village panacea) because it was so widely available and useful. In English folk medicine it was named "poor man's treacle." It is considered to possess five out of six of the primary tastes of Ayurvedic medicine. Modern research has isolated a medicinal compound, alliin, that justifies many of the traditional applications. Medical research carried out in the first half of the twentieth century established unimpeachable scientific proof of its efficacy in many serious and chronic disorders. Garlic contains organic sulphur compounds (including alliin, which converts to the medically active allicin), enzymes, B vitamins, minerals, and flavonoids*.

Although garlic has been (and still is) rated as a general panacea, it possesses specific properties that are due to its strongly warming and mildly moistening capacities. These make it beneficial in conditions that are cold and dry. Like many warming medicines garlic is rarefying or dissolving, so that it thins cloying substances and then expels them. These were the properties most highly valued by Galen *(Megatechne XIII)*. More than a thousand years later garlic was still appreciated for the same properties. William Salmon (1692, 50) recommended "Essentia Allii, or essence of Garlick" when the bowels were "afflicted with a gross, tough, and cold matter." It "is an admirable thing; for it exceedingly heats & warms; discusses

wind profoundly, and withal prevents the breeding and increase of the cold flegmatick humor."

The strong smell of garlic is due to the sulphurous alliin compounds that are stimulating, detoxifying, and antimicrobial. Garlic increases secretion from the mucosa to improve digestion and lubricate the passage of viscid mucus, stimulates internal metabolism, and kills bacteria through direct attack (like a sulfa drug) and by changing the environment in which they thrive. A peculiarity about garlic is that it does not indiscriminately kill bacteria, but is selective in its action so that (unlike antibiotics) it tends to destroy foreign pathogens while supporting the positive flora of the intestine. This has led to its successful use killing intestinal parasites and bacteria while reestablishing the healthy flora of the colon. One early researcher/clinician, Dr. E. E. Marcovici, suggested that the principal modus operandi of garlic was based on the fact that it corrects imbalance in the intestinal flora that causes toxification through the bloodstream. (This theory is not accepted in modern biomedicine.) He first became acquainted with the curative properties of garlic in dysentery and cholera during World War I. Another researcher/clinician, Dr. Minchin, used it successfully in tuberculosis, diagnosed by the presence of the bacteria (Fernie, 1914).

In addition to acting as an antibiotic, the sulphur in garlic is also stimulating to the metabolism. The oil is nutritive, so garlic is both catabolic and anabolic. Thus it helps the body eliminate waste material that supports bacteria and builds replacement tissue. This would help explain the powerful and well-documented influence on cardiovascular health. We now know that bacterial infection in the walls of the arteries combines with deposition to cause heart disease. However, an even more exact mechanism is proven: garlic stimulates production of a substance that relaxes the arteries. This is reliable, like an allopathic drug, but also only palliative—it does not cure high blood pressure—in other words, symptoms return when it is discontinued.

We should not overlook the fact that garlic is nutritive and anabolic because it contains fixed oils that provide good food for the

body. Thus it is indicated in cases of sympathetic excess, where there is nervousness, anxiety, insomnia, and weight loss. It helps move the organism into the parasympathetic, improving appetite, digestion, and absorption, removing gas, bloating, colic, GI inflammation, lack of appetite, and anemia. It can be effective in either weight loss or gain.

There are certain persons in whom garlic causes uncomfortable symptoms. Dr. Kristin Nolfi, a Danish physician (*My Experiences with Living Food*, n.d.), notes that it will cause digestive upset in those with a weak liver. The reason for this is that garlic stimulates metabolism. I have seen dietary use of garlic cause symptoms of sympathetic excess or hyperadrenalism (anxiety, nervousness, high blood pressure, sweating, rapid heartbeat). This may be considered an inadvertent homeopathic proving, or it may be considered a warning about susceptibility—people with adrenaline excess tendencies might be intolerant to garlic. So it is generally contraindicated in heat and nervous irritation.

TASTE:

pungent, sweet, slightly salty • warm, moist • stimulating, oily

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Dull, obtuse, loss of memory, premature aging.
- Nervousness, irritability, anxiety, tiredness, agitation, and mild depression.

HEAD

- Headache, throbbing; dizziness; ringing in the ear; blurred vision.
- *Ear infections* (drop of oil in the ear or a sliver wrapped in gauze).
- *Incipient head cold; burning and itching in the throat;* sneezing, stuffiness, allergies.
- Chronic inflammation of the tonsils, salivary glands, neighboring lymph glands; prevents swollen glands after acute upper respiratory disease.
- Empyema of the maxillary sinus.
- Loose teeth, tartar.
- Sore throat, pharyngitis, laryngitis; "clears and strengthens the throat."

RESPIRATION

- *Respiratory conditions; coughs, flu, chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, shortness of breath; impacted mucus (rub oil on chest or eat fresh)*.
- Chronic cough remaining after whooping cough, with debility.
- Congestion with mucus dried out and adhesive, at the bifurcation of the tubes; impacted, dried out mucus in the lungs; dry cough.

DIGESTION

- "Wind in the stomach caused by biliousness."
- Weak digestion, lack of appetite, diarrhea, weight loss, pallor, anemia, numbness, tingling, fatigue, shortness of breath after slight exertion and fever (case history, cured).
- *Digestive stagnation; parasites, worms, candida; phlegm, gas;* diverticulitis.
- Diarrhea, cholera.
- Constipation.
- "Soreness in the bowels."

HEART AND CIRCULATION

- *Hypertension, cholesterol, arteriosclerosis* (palliative, sometimes curative). Breaks up cholesterol, makes it water soluble, and kills bacteria associated with vascular changes. Releases gas in the blood vessels, reducing hypertension.
- Increases circulation.
- Angina pains.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema; swelling of the extremities.
- "Dries all the moisture in the body" and decreases attendant "sluggishness."
- Kidney stones.
- Lumbago.

FEMALE

- Swelling and tenderness of the breasts.
- Leucorrhea.
- "Promotes menstruation and dissolves swellings."
- Menstruation; cramping during the first two days (case history, cured).
- Menstruation; extreme weakness, so that she could hardly do anything except lie still and not talk; very shaky on her feet; with nervousness and trembling; cold sweats, extreme thirst, faintness, sometimes violent nausea and diarrhea (case history, cured).
- Menstruation, cramping; worse on the right side, dragging and pressing downward, starting in the back and spreading to the front, with bearing down pains that felt as if everything would fall out of her pelvis (case history, cured).
- Morning sickness; almost constant nausea and vomiting.
- Menopause: hot flashes, irritability, insomnia, palpitations.
- Menopause: excess androgenism in women, facial hair, baldness, weight gain, premature aging, memory loss.

MALE

- Impotence.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis; numbness, tingling.
- Paralysis.

SKIN

- Athlete's foot (external).
- Infectious impetigo (cf. *Juglans*).
- "A wonderful remedy for psoriasis."
- Boils, suppurating sores, blisters, bedsores.

FEVER

- Blood poisoning; bites of scorpions and snakes.
- Fever, chills, epidemic fever.
- Hot flashes.

OTHER

- Dandruff.
- Antitoxic, anticancer reputation.
- Cold feet (rub on oil).
- It is said to cause satiation when used in food (Greek-Arabic medicine).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Garlic is best used fresh. Fresh cloves or cloves preserved in oil or honey, or capsules of the oil are some of the best methods of preparation. It is taken with parsley to cut down the smell. For a child of six or seven, Mrs. Child (1837, 56, 121) recommends, "a third of a common sized clove, morning, noon and evening; gradually increasing the dose as the system becomes accustomed to it." A ten-year-old or older can start on half a clove. A medicinal

tincture can be made in brandy, dose 10–20 drops several times a day (Fernie, 1914).

CAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS:

"Large doses, especially in excited states of the system, are apt to occasion irritation, flatulence, and fever" (Mrs. Child). Also, they often are vomited up; combine with butter to reduce the emesis (Julia Graves). Eating too much causes diarrhea. *Garlic aggravates hot conditions. It is contraindicated in hot stomach and liver, hepatitis, pancreatitis, and hiatal hernia*. To counteract the smell of garlic on the breath parsley leaf is taken (Fernie, 1914; and subsequent authors).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Rex Adams (collected case histories, medical research, 1–10, 14–16, 19, 21, 22, 25–27, 29–36, 38, 39, 41), Chalid Ottway (1, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 28, 37, 40, 42, 44, 45), Julia Graves (10, 12, 47), Matthew Wood (12), Lydia Marie Child (11).

Alnus glutinosa. European Alder.

European alder seems to have virtually the same properties as its cousin, the American tag alder (Alnus serrulata). *The details are not as well developed in the clinical picture, but we see the same emphasis on tissue cleansing, glandular swelling, poor digestion, and dry, chronic skin disease. Today both species have been largely forgotten*.

European or black alder, not to be mistaken for the American black alder *(Ilex verticillata)*, is traditionally classified as a bitter and astringent. The bitters purge the gallbladder and intestines, but the tannins improve the tone, which is much desired in a purgative. "No

part of the black alder is used in medicine except the inner rind; this is yellow, and is a good purge" (John Hill, 1740, 54). Bitter yellow substances frequently act on the gallbladder and intestines. "It is excellent in the jaundice. In Yorkshire they bruise the bark with vinegar, and use it outwardly for the itch."

"A decoction of the bark is useful to bathe swellings and inflammations, especially of the throat, and has been known to cure ague," writes Maude Grieve (1931, 18). Malaria, or intermittent fever (ague), is frequently associated with the gallbladder and with bitter and astringent tonics. "Peasants on the Alps are reported to be frequently cured of rheumatism by being covered with bags full of the heated leaves."

"It is a tree which has a gloomy history in many sagas and stories, not least in Goethe's *Erlekonig* describing the Alder-king with his terrible daughters, waiting to snatch up innocent children" (Law, 1973, 26).

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Rhinitis.
- Sore throat, pharyngitis.
- Enlarged glands.

DIGESTION

- Aphthous ulcers (canker sores).
- Stomach debility; lack of gastric secretion; with indigestion.
- Inactive colon, with constipation, or diarrhea.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallbladder congestion, jaundice.

KIDNEYS

- Edema (leaf tea).

FEMALE

- Leucorrhea (douche).
- Mastitis (leaf poultice).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Rheumatism (external).

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- Skin conditions; pustular, scaly, chronic; eruptions, acne, eczema, furunculosis, impetigo, scruffy scalp.
- Passive hemorrhage (cones).
- Bruises, burns (leaf poultice).
- Gangrene (leaf poultice).
- Inflammation (buds).

PREPARATION, CAUTIONS, AND DOSAGE:

The inner bark of the alder is so bitter that it is hard to avoid vomiting if moderate to large doses are used, according to Donald Law (1973, 26). He recommends not using it internally and records an odd factoid: “Once used by witches to induce trances.” Decoction for purgation: “boil an ounce of it in a quart of water, and throw in at least two drams of ginger and some caraway seeds; let the patient proportion the quantity to his strength” (John Hill).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Maude Grieve (11), Donald Law (8, 14), Christopher Menzies-Trull, John Hill (6, 7, 12).

Alpinia officinarum. Galangal.

Galangal is a product of the Spice Islands, long used in Western medicine and herbalism. It is a warming stimulant, sort of a cross between ginger and cayenne. “Galangal is a stimulating aromatic

and has been successfully employed to aid the digestive process, preventing fermentation and removing *flatus*. It will be found especially useful in some forms of *dyspepsia*, preventing vomiting or sickness of the stomach, and facilitating digestion. It may be used in all cases in which a stimulating aromatic is indicated. It has some reputation as a remedy for *perineal relaxation* with *hemorrhoids*, and for a *lax* and *pendulous* abdomen" (King, 1898, II:906).

TASTE:

warm, aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

relaxation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Indigestion when there is fermentation and *flatus*.
- *Dyspepsia* when there is vomiting or sickness at the stomach.
- Hemorrhoids, with relaxation of the perineum.
- Lax and pendulous abdomen.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Fluid extract, 5–10 drops (Fyfe, 1909).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John King (1–4).

Althaea officinalis. Marshmallow.

Marshmallow is native to salt marshes along the ocean in Europe, but is widely cultivated and naturalized in the New World. It can also grow along inland waterways and ditches. The root and leaves contain large amounts of mucilage and pectins, sugars, flavonoids, tannins, salt, and phenolic acids. Hollyhock (Althaea rosea), *low mallow* (Malva neglecta), *and other mallows are used as substitutes or cognates*.

The flowers, leaves, and roots of marshmallow and many of its cousins have been used around the world as a source of a mucilage that is moistening, soothing, anti-inflammatory, and softening. It is the most anti-inflammatory of the common mucilages. It is salty and is therefore also diuretic and emollient. As an emollient it will soften and break up hard tissue (water follows salt). These properties give it a broad, general, nonspecific applicability as a

palliative or curative in almost any hot, dry, hard condition. It would appear from the length of the account given by Nicholas Culpeper (1653) that it was one of his primary remedies and that he used it in a general way for a wide variety of conditions. He mentions saving his son from dysentery with marshmallow. It is very important as a palliative in such serious bowel diseases as Crohn's disease and colitis, though it is not usually curative (Matthew Wood).

Although althaea has a broad, general application on the mucosa throughout the body, it has a specific relationship with the kidneys. This is not surprising for a salty mucilage. It has been called the "most diuretic of the mucilages" and "the most mucilaginous of the diuretics." It has a soothing operation on the kidneys and bladder while at the same time increasing diuresis. The famous early-nineteenth-century London herbalist, Samuel Westcott Tilke, wrote, "I have given it successfully for gravel; and to persons of a costive habit of body, I believe nothing can surpass it. If it be taken every day for a month, in a decoction or infusion, it will, from its oily nature, entirely do away with the necessity of 'forcing' medicines [cathartics], which do more harm than good" (Webb, 1916, 232).

The job of the kidneys is to balance the water and solids. Some interesting symptoms related to this were described by two different students at a lecture I gave. One reported that marshmallow was beneficial for dried out people who lacked thirst, while the other said it was good for people with an excessive thirst and copious urination. We often see exact opposites treated by a single herbal medicine because these natural remedies are normalizers that reestablish balance rather than drugs, which force the body.

A good specific indication for althaea is a tongue that is red and dry, with a glazed, shining surface, sometimes with horizontal breaks or cuts in the glaze. This indicates dryness, hardening, and heat (Matthew Wood).

Althaea has long been used externally. Galen considered it particularly effective for preventing the formation of pus. He recommended making a cataplasm by cooking althaea roots in water, adding barley flour, and cooking for a long time *(Ad*

Glauconem II). One student recommended from experience the use of a wash of marshmallow on dry eczema and psoriasis. It also has a lubricating effect on the knees and joints, and on stiff muscles.

Berkeley herbalist Pam Fisher, who has worked with many cancer patients and survivors, says that "marshmallow is going to be your best friend" during chemotherapy. People will fare through chemo "magically." Drink 1/2 gallon of a cold extraction of the root per day. It is, in my experience, nearly a specific for smokers, or recent smokers, who have dried out, overheated membranes.

David Dalton (2006, 60) gives an extensive account of *Althaea officinalis* as a flower essence. He considers it to be a remedy for hardening of the personality, inflexibility, hardheartedness, intolerance, and inability to feel one's emotions. He looks upon it as a heart remedy that helps keep the heart in contact with and regulating the lower chakras and strong emotions. He mentions it also for hardening of the arteries. I have noticed that marshmallow will sometimes bring down high blood pressure.

TASTE:

(root) salty, sweet • cool • mucilaginous

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy and excitation dependent on lack of moisture

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Inflexible, narrow-minded, emotionally rigid or unfeeling.
- Hardhearted, insensitive, unsympathetic.

HEAD

- Eyes, sore, inflamed (external).

MUCOSA

- Lips red, dry, sometimes with a slight white powder around them.
- *Tongue red, dry, glazed, burnished, horizontal cracks; with dry coating.*
- Irritated, inflamed, hot, dry mucosa.
- Sore throat.

LYMPHATICS

- Swollen, hard, indurated glands (external).

RESPIRATION

- *Dry cough in the throat or upper bronchus; in children; worse at night* (syrup).
- *Congestion, catarrh, hardened mucus*.
- Bronchitis and asthma.
- Whooping cough.
- *Emphysema.*

DIGESTION

- Soothing and anti-inflammatory to the digestive tract; acid stomach, burning (capsules).
- Overacidity, ulcers, gastric, duodenal, mucus colitis (roots).
- Low digestive enzyme production (leaves) with gastric acidity (leaves and roots).
- Diarrhea, dysentery, Crohn's disease (palliative), colitis (capsules, tablets).
- Constipation.
- Hemorrhoids (external).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Painful, scanty urination; soothes the passage of stones.
- Cystitis, strangury, hematuria.
- Gravel.

FEMALE

- Lactation: nipples, sore (external).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis in knees; with dry mucosa, tongue red, dry, latitudinal cracks (cured).

SKIN

- Sores, ulcers, burns, boils, and inflamed skin (external).
- Skin red, dry, with white powder exfoliating.

OTHER

- High blood pressure with water retention.
- Diabetes.
- *Chemotherapy*.
- Thirst with copious urination or no thirst with systemic dryness.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The flowers, leaves, and roots are used somewhat interchangeably. However, "marshmallow root has been used primarily in the digestive system, and leaf in the urinary system and lungs" (Hoffmann, 2003, 526). The leaves are harvested just before flowering to enhance the mucilaginous extraction (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994). Mucilage extracts poorly in alcohol, so it is often used in capsules or tablets. The root is best cold extracted in water (Michael Moore). The root and leaf can be used in a tincture, as a specific remedy, rather than as a general mucilage.

CAUTIONS:

None known (German E Commission; Bisset and Wichtl, 1994).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, David Dalton (1, 2), Nicholas Culpeper (18), Margi Flint (4), Dorothy Hall (15, 16), William LeSassier (16), Samuel Westcott Tilke (18, 22), John William Fyfe (14, 15, 17, 20, 21), Matthew Wood (5, 6, 24, 26, 27), A. W. and L. R. Priest (19), Louise Tenney (3, 7–13, 17, 18, 21–23, 25, 28), Pam Fisher (29).

Amygdalus communis var. amara. Sweet Almond.

Almond is a member of the rose family, closely related to plum, peach, and apricot. It is native to the warmer regions of Asia Minor and North Africa, but cultivated throughout the Mediterranean and in similar climates around the world. The sight of almond trees blossoming in the orchards, fields, and hillsides of a Mediterranean countryside in February is a sight to behold.

There are two very different almonds, the sweet and the bitter. They are considered to be varieties of the same species, but they differ greatly in culinary and medicinal value. The kernel of the sweet almond is edible but bitter almond contains high levels of a substance (amygdalin) that breaks down into cyanide, making it toxic. For this reason, bitter almond has not received treatment here. Both contain about fifty percent of a fixed oil that is pressed and used in cooking, skin care, and medicine—almond oil. The cyanide is easily removed from the oil of the bitter kernel. The long history and storied names of those who have used almond testify that it is as powerful a remedy as it is commonplace. Sweet almond is principally used in the form of almond oil, almond paste, or simply as a food. It is lubricating, nourishing, and cooling, thus reducing dryness and heat. This sets it in a category similar to its cousin *Prunus persica* (peach), except that almond is more moistening and less cooling.

Galen recommended almond. Abu Merwan Ibn Zuhr observed that it protects the moisture of the organs, including the brain. He recommended that the spine be frequently massaged with lukewarm almond oil to prevent problems in old age. Almonds also specifically

strengthen the stomach and liver and “are among the most salutary of fruits.” These statements are quoted with approval by Moses Maimonides, who in addition recommended almonds prepared with rose leaves (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:306, 347, 349). This increases the cooling properties; the combination of cooling, astringing, and nourishing powers that result would make a perfect instrument for the palliation of tuberculosis, which is how it was sometimes used. Almond continued to be esteemed in Arabic medicine; a modern account is given by Chalid Ottway (1933). Hildegard von Bingen (1994, 113) confirms the use for the brain, giving some peculiar details. “One whose brain is empty, and whose face has a bad color from a pain in the head, should frequently eat the inmost kernels of this fruit. They fill his brain and give him the correct color. Also, one who ails in his lungs.”

Almond was especially associated with the treatment of pleurisy, a dry condition of the lining of the lungs. Gerard and Culpeper repeat this application. Dr. Thomas Sydenham (1847, 63) gives great detail about the cases of cough in which almond is remedial. “It often happens that the patient is harassed by a troublesome cough during the whole course” of a lengthy fever. The cough is dry at first, but “afterwards brings up thickened sputa, the expectoration whereof is difficult, inasmuch as the fever has taken its time to bake it hard, and to parch it dry. And now the patient fears that he will be suffocated, for his strength is gone, and the tough and viscid phlegm is more than he can hawk up. In cases like these I rarely use anything beyond the oil of sweet almonds, newly drawn; except when it happens, as it sometimes does, that the patient has an aversion to it.” The dosage should be less than a spoonful, as “the stomach is already weak enough, and sufficiently inclined to vomit.” It is interesting that peach is used to settle nausea and vomiting. In addition to cooling and lubricating the lungs almond “will act as a bland nutriment, and restore, in some degree, the impaired powers of the patient.”

John Hill (1740, 54) emphasizes the use of small quantities of almond emulsion to treat “people in consumptions and hectics.” That would be tuberculosis or conditions where there is weakness

and emaciation associated with a fever that comes on in the afternoons and leaves the person weak and debilitated.

"The sweet almond oil deserves one of the first places among the oils in the apotheca," writes Father Sebastian Kneipp (1898, 135). "It operates … in a softening cooling, and dissolving manner. It dissolves phlegm in the windpipe, or in the stomach, and in the latter case it restores appetite and digestion. In inflammations, especially in the dreaded inflammation of the lungs, it cools."

Maurice Mességué (1979, 22) emphasizes the effect of sweet almond oil on the digestive mucosa, though he cautions, as does Sydenham, that it is difficult for those with a weak stomach. It was the worm remedy of choice during his childhood and is somewhat purgative. It soothes the urinary tract (compare with its cousin, peach for worms and cystitis) and is effective when used externally on burns, irritations, itching, erysipelas, and superficial inflammation of the skin. Mességué describes almond somewhat more as a cooling agent than a nourishing or lubricating one. He combines it with violet leaves for the lungs—as Sydenham did on occasion.

Dr. Edward Shook (1978, 136) recommends an emulsion of the kernels (see below) for delicate children, wasting, aging, and those disposed to tuberculosis and diabetes. "We did not exaggerate when we said that sweet almond was one of the greatest builders of brain, bone, and flesh that is available to us." Compare this with the statement of Ibn Zuhr, above. The testimony of the ages weaves a clear pattern upon which to base the use of this classical remedy.

The references to almond's use as a tonic to the brain and stomach perhaps explain the following comment by Dr. Fernie (1914, 20): "Persons who can readily digest these products [almonds] are believed to derive from them a quickening of the intellect in its magnetism, and in keenness, or argumentative force."

TASTE:

sweet, nutty • moist, cool • oily

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- *Thin, delicate constitutions and children; wasting and aging.*
- *Brain, spine, and marrow tonic.*

RESPIRATION

- Humming in the ears, pain in the ears, cramps in the ears, obdurate ear wax (6–8 drops of the oil in the ear, stopped with cotton).
- *Deafness due to obstruction of the middle ear* (almond oil, 2–8 drops in ear, 4x/week).
- *Pleurisy.*
- *Dried out mucus in the lungs, with weakness, making expectoration difficult.*
- *Stubborn cough.*
- Asthma.

DIGESTION

- *Inability to bear much food.*
- Constipation from dry mucosa.
- Worms (oil or ash of the roots in olive oil).
- Diabetes mellitus type II, as a food source without sugar.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Bladder; burning sensation.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Creakiness of the joints (external).

SKIN

- Burns, skin irritations, itching, erysipelas, dry, scaly skin.
- Ringworm, eczema, itch, skin irritation.
- Burns (ash of the roots).
- Swellings, with great heat, inflammation, piercing pain.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Fresh almonds are blanched (skin removed) to limit irritation of the stomach in some people. They are then pulverized with a moderate quantity of water to form an emulsion "of elegant flavor and superior demulcent properties" (Cook, 1869, 241). This ancient recipe was modified by Edward Shook: 1 ounce almond meal, 1 ounce sugar, 1 dram gum acacia, combine and stir slowly into a mixture with 1 ounce glycerin and 2 ounces water, then beat into a paste. Almond oil is drawn off commercially. It can be made into an emulsion with egg yolk, sugar, and water for a nourishing pulmonary remedy. It is also used as a base for massage lotion.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Ibn Zuhr (1, 2), Sebastian Kneipp (3, 4, 5, 14, 18), Maude Grieve, Thomas Sydenham (5, 6), Edward Shook (1, 9, 12), Maurice Mességué (9, 11, 13, 15, 16), Chalid Ottway (2, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17).

Amygdalus persica. Peach.

See Prunus persica.

Anagallis arvensis. Scarlet Pimpernel.

This attractive little plant is a European member of the primula family. It is not commonly used in herbalism at the present time, but a few people

still use it, and it possesses many intriguing qualities and constituents, making a longer account excusable.

Pimpernel thrives in my garden, but in the cold north it does not hop the dangerous boundary into the wild regions beyond. The dainty flower is most attractive and mysterious, a tiny fleck of salmon growing in a sea of green stems and leaves. The flower closes at once if rain threatens or falls. This earned it the name "poor man's weather glass" or "Venus' weather glass."

Poor men and poor Venuses have to work in the sun, so they are prone to freckles and roughness of the skin—for which this plant was used. "The face or skin being washed therewith, it is good to cleanse it from its roughness, ill color, and other deformities thereof, and to make it soft, smooth, and clear" (Salmon, 1710, 865). That sounds Venusian indeed. I once asked a Southern girl why freckles were so undesirable and she explained, "Nobody wanted to have freckles or a sun tan in the old days because it meant you worked in the fields." Not a fit activity for Venus.

At one time scarlet pimpernel was held in high esteem. It was considered especially active for melancholy, mental diseases, and epilepsy. Among its traditional uses are gout, rheumatism, edema, blockage of the liver, spleen, and kidneys. It is a diaphoretic used to bring on sweat and eliminate fever.

Grieve (1931) relates an old rhyme, "No heart can think, no tongue can tell / The virtues of the Pimpernel." Today the virtue of pimpernel has been almost completely forgotten—no tongue told, I guess. This is despite the fact that the plant possesses very active constituents. It contains saponins and has a soapy, acrid taste. Looking over accounts from the old literature one might guess that modern writers were embarrassed by the enthusiasm of their predecessors. In order to render an account of the medicinal properties of pimpernel we need to return to rather old sources.

Galen classified pimpernel as hot and dry in the first degree, meaning that it opens the pores to drive out sweat but tones them and strengthens resistance to disease. This corresponds closely to the

actions for which it was most valued in the old days: sweating to drive out fever and normalizing the tone of the skin. It was used for drying up running ulcers and wounds and also for dry conditions where the fluids had been driven out and the tissues were hot and irritable. The relationship with water is reinforced by the way the flower closes in wet weather, as if to protect itself against a surfeit of water. Galen noted that pimpernel had an "attractive" faculty, drawing out thorns and splinters.

Pimpernel continued to be used during the Renaissance. "The whole plant is used; and the best method of giving it, is in an infusion, made by pouring boiling water upon it fresh gathered: This is an excellent drink in fevers; it promotes sweat, and throws out the small-pox, measles, or any other eruptions" (John Hill, 1740, 298).

William Salmon (1710) recounts that, in addition to expelling the toxin of fever to the surface, pimpernel "cures the bitings of serpents, as vipers, rattle snakes, mad-dogs, and other venomous creatures: is good against the strangury, stone, and gravel, and heals all wounds and ulcers, whether inward or outward; stops the flux of humors into any part, eases pains in the ears, and the piles, and prevails against an ophthalmy, and other diseases of the eyes." Unlike most British herbalists, Salmon had lived in South Carolina where rattlesnakes, cottonmouths, copperheads, and all manner of poisonous snakes abound, so I am inclined to consider his testimony.

The tincture made in vinegar is Salmon's preparation for the plague, pestilential fevers, and contagious diseases, "extinguishing almost in a moment the preternatural heat. It quenches thirst, restores a lost appetite, causes good digestion, opens all manner of obstructions of the viscera, but chiefly of the lungs, spleen, and reins, and is good against the bitings of mad dogs, and other venomous creatures. Dose: so many drops as will make the vehicle pleasantly sharp, and to be often repeated in the day time." The ointment or balsam applied "to a pestilential bubo [plague sore], it ripens and breaks it."

Anagallis was given a homeopathic proving that reproduced many of the symptoms for which it was traditionally used in herbalism.

Despite this, it did not retain a footing in either herbalism or homeopathy. The proving did reproduce the “hilarity” with which the plant has been associated since ancient times. The name *Anagallis* is from the Greek meaning “to laugh out loud.” This led to its use in depression. In parts of England it is still known as “Laughter Bringer.” It is necessary when laughter is absent. “Will calm rages in adults and children, if they can be induced to drink it” (Juliette de Bairacli Levy, 1974, 111).

One of the few contemporary practitioners to use scarlet pimpernel is Eliot Cowan. It is one of his favorite plants for imbalances of the “fire element.” He journeyed to meet the plant spirit, who revealed that pimpernel is for opening the heart after it had been closed due to experiences of emotional cold and heartlessness. It is for gruff people who hide their heart, and for learning to laugh with abandon and cheer. He associates it with the heart protector organ system (Cowan, 1995, 123).

TASTE:

acrid, soapy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Depression and despondency.
- Rage.

HEAD

- Convulsions, fainting, swooning, fits, “vapors.”
- Migraine, headache; inveterate.
- Vertigo, lethargy, apoplexy, epilepsy, nightmares.
- Eyes; cataracts; weeping.
- Toothache; “dropt into the ear on the contrary side.”
- Roughness of the skin of the face, discoloration, and freckles.

RESPIRATION

- Nose; cold, moist, and pituitous discharges.
- Ulcers of the lungs.

DIGESTION

- Hemorrhoids; painful (compress).
- Jaundice.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Urinary tract; strangury, pain, heat, stoppage, edema, stone, gravel.
- Ulcers of the kidneys and bladder.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Gout pain.

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- Contusion, swelling (external).
- Bites; serpents, scorpions, hornets, venomous creatures (apply fresh plant).
- Uncomplicated fresh wounds; draws together the lips and heals them rapidly.
- Ulcers; old, fretting or running, and filthy; from poisonous bites; cleanses and incarnates new flesh.
- Poison ivy.

FEVER

- Plague or pestilential fevers; brings on a heavy sweat (the decoction, as hot as the patient can bear).
- Plague sores or buboes; “ripens and breaks.”

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

William Salmon (1710) states that the plant is best given fresh. John Hill (1740, 298) makes the same point. “The dried leaves may be

given in powder or a tea made of the whole dried plant, but nothing is so well as the infusion of it fresh; those who have not seen it tried this way do not know how valuable a medicine it is." Thomas Green (1824) reiterates this point. Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1974, 112) has a special way to make the tea that maintains its freshness. "Macerate the whole plant and steep in cold water in sunlight for several hours a handful of the herb to a small cup of water. Take a tablespoon three times daily." The tincture is made from 10 ounces of fresh leaves and flowers in a pint of medium proof alcohol. Dose is 1–5 drops (Grieve, 1931, 634).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Maude Grieve, William Salmon (1, 3–11, 13–20, 22), John Hill (20), Eliot Cowan, John Henry Clarke (homeopathic provings confirm most of the traditional indications), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (2, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21).

Anethum graveolens. Dill.

Dill is a member of the apiaceae family native to Europe. It is similar to other mild carminatives such as fennel, caraway, and anise. It contains flavonoids, coumarins, fixed oils, proteins, phenolic acids, triterpenes, and volatile oils. It is traditionally used in Europe for colic and gas. Because it is so mild it is especially favored for children. It also is used to stimulate lactation. These uses are also found under its cousin, fennel. A more unusual use is mentioned by W. T. Fernie (1914, 145). "The weird gipsy, Meg Merrlies, crooned a cradle song" at the birth of an infant to protect it against witches: "Trefoil, vervain, John's wort, Dill / Hinder witches of their will."

Angelica archangelica, A. atropurpurea. Angelica.

Angelica archangelica *is one of the grand traditional remedies of northern Europe. It grows along rivers and on the shore of the Baltic regions and the Scandinavian states, south into Alpine areas. It is an important shamanic plant among the Lapps or Saami of the Far North. It can be grown in gardens in North America and is naturalized in some places. It contains volatile oils (warming, cooling, antiseptic), resin, wax, bitters, furanocoumarins, flavonoids, sugars, organic acids, and phytosterols*.

A related species, Angelica atropurpurea, *of eastern North America, can be used instead of the officinal archangelica. "Its uses are very similar to the European" (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 71), but it is not accepted in herbal commerce and there is testimony that the fresh root is toxic. I use the American species in my own practice and find it commensurate with the European*.

These angelicas are also similar in properties to the angelicas of China. They open the periphery (induce perspiration) and regulate menstruation like their Eastern relatives.

The root of the angelica is brown, furry, oily, and pungent—the picture of a "bear medicine" in American Indian medicine. Bear eats such roots in the spring to wake up and start rebuilding his mass. Other members of this group include osha, lomatium, American liquorice, balsam root, and spikenard. They stimulate the cortisol side of the adrenal cortex, to increase appetite, digestion, and nutrition. Hence they are suited to thin, pale, undernourished people. However, they are sometimes suited to large, stout, strong, bear people. In European phytotherapy it is said that angelica calms both the sympathetic and the parasympathetic sides of the autonomic nervous system. When the sympathetic is overactive it creates a condition of nervousness and shuts down the digestion, creating a condition of "asthenia"—the pale, thin, dry, *vata* type. When the parasympathetic is dominant we have a condition of gastrointestinal excess, creating a hot digestion with a heavy, damp, cool interior. Because angelica affects the circulation, the thin types may have purple fingers from poor peripheral circulation, while the

thick ones may have blue-green-yellow-gray coloration around their veins (look at the forearms) due to blood stagnation.

Angelica root is pungent, bitter, sweet, oily, warm, and stimulating. Hence, it has long been used in European herbalism and medicine as a carminative, to warm and stimulate the digestion. The bitters and sugars get the appetite and secretions going, while the spicy compounds stimulate circulation to the stomach and periphery. The oil stimulates the "fat of the kidneys," the adrenal cortex, releasing the cortisol, which supports digestion and raises blood sugar levels. The circulation of the blood is opened to the periphery to bring nutrition to all parts of the body, to stimulate fluid movement in the possibly dried out joints, to rebuild the fatty deposits insulating the nerves, and to improve circulation to the hands, feet, and uterus. Thus, angelica is an excellent remedy for an undernourished "asthenic" (Rudolf Weiss).

Looking at the root from a different angle, it is light and airy. In fact, it contains pockets of air. It grows in damp conditions. Thus, it aerates or brings air into the watery realm, as it is expressed by anthroposophical writers (Husemann and Wolff). It makes fluids more active and breaks up excessive concentrations of water, phlegm, and blood. It promotes peripheral circulation, and opens the lungs and skin. Hence it is beneficial for heavy, stout, blood-stagnant people—bear people—who need their relaxed, watery side activated.

The bear medicines, including angelica, are used "on the rocks" in the American Indian sweat lodge. This serves both a spiritual and physical purpose, as the vapors open the imagination and mind, as mentioned below, while at the same time helping to open the skin and bring the circulation to the surface. The sweat lodge teaches the value of perspiration. When the skin is functioning in a healthy manner, the inner pores are also open and water is able to move, with oxygen, food, and wastes, through the body like a fine vapor. Angelica fulfills this function, opening the sweat pores to release perspiration and feeding the oil of the body to support the sebaceous glands. Hence it is remedial in chill from dampness and cold. It was a traditional remedy for contagious diseases.

The lungs are closely allied with the skin, and here angelica also shows its stuff. It is indicated in old bronchitis cases where there is exhaustion and the mucus is thin and difficult to expectorate. It drys and warms the lungs. It improves circulation into the lungs, thus aeration through the blood. As the phlegm improves in texture and the blood comes in, the mucosa secrete new immune cells and enzymes, which renew the defenses of the respiratory tract.

Angelica acts on the lymphatics, as it does on the vasculature. “A most impressive angelica therapy is the treatment of swellings, inflammations, and glandular indurations, particularly of the head and neck region, and above all in children with an adenoidal constitution” (Husemann and Wolff, 1982, 340). This is the “scrofulous” constitution of old-time medicine.

Through its action on the blood angelica also assists the liver. It improves circulation through the portal vein and the hepatic artery, bringing in more food/toxins for metabolism and protecting the hepatic cells against injury. Thus, it is useful in wasting or “asthenia of hepatic origin, hepatic insufficiency (hemorrhoids, constipation), insufficient immunity of hepatic origin, viral hepatitis” (Kenner and Requena, 2001, 107).

Again, through the circulation and liver angelica influences the uterus. Although European angelica is not traditionally used as a female remedy, and is not considered to have estrogenic compounds, like the Chinese angelica, or tang kwei *(Angelica sinensis)*, in fact it does act on the female organism. I have used both *Angelica archangelica* and the native American *Angelica atropurpurea* on the indications for tang kwei with success. By warming and stirring up the blood the Western angelicas relieve blood congestion and cramping in the uterus. Stephen Buhner has even developed a profile for women in whom the Western angelicas are most efficient. He notes that it is particularly beneficial in women in their late twenties who are trying to contend with role-model issues that have blocked their self-development.

Through stimulation of the circulation angelica acts on the brain, head, joints, and extremities. Thus it has been used for syncope, vertigo, nervousness, and fatigue (Kenner and Requena). The

increased blood flow to the joints probably helps move the waters into the cartilage, which is not directly sanguified. Angelica probably also helps through the oils, which contribute to the building of cartilage and nerve sheaths. And it helps the skin, as we have seen.

My friend Julia Graves argues that I should include it as an alterative, partly on traditional grounds, partly because it contains bitters, and partly because it cleanses so many areas of the body. So, Julia, it is done.

Angelica is used to stop smoking and alcohol use. “The consumption of the tea temporarily changes the taste,” explains Australian herbalist Harald Tietze (1996, 38). “Alcoholism and smoking is often reduced due to the lack of taste. Angelica calms the nerves and helps in moments of craving.” Smokers can also chew on the seeds. “Said to cause a disgust for spirituous liquors” (W. T. Fernie, 1914).

Just as the bear goes into hibernation through the winter, bear medicines usually relax the mind, open the imagination, and bring people into dreamtime. Angelica certainly has this capacity. The most active way to bring on this effect is to burn the root and smell the fumes. They are gently relaxing to the mind and body, while activating the imagination. Angelica is a shamanic medicine among the Saami or Laplanders. Julia Graves says, “Angelica aligns you to walk with your guardian angel.” Harald Tietze (1996, 39) says, “If you have space for only one plant in the garden, plant the Angelica.”

TASTE:

(seed, root) pungent, sweet, bitter, salty • warm • oily, stimulating, diffusive

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Thin, dry, pallid persons with poor digestion, gas, bloating, but tendencies to accumulation of fluids; poor peripheral circulation, cold, purple hands and feet.*
- Thick women with blood stagnation.
- *Complexion around veins yellow/gray/blue/green.*

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Emotionally empty, hollow; stimulates the imagination and relaxes the mind.
- Cut off from spiritual world; "I can't believe, I can't pray"; life no longer makes sense, depression.
- *Mental dullness, exhaustion, and obtuseness*, sometimes with phlegm congestion.
- Intense mental acuity and focus; relaxes the mind.
- Anguish, spasms, nervous excitation, and fatigue; calms excess in both the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic.

HEAD

- Headache (from stress), migraine, vertigo, fainting.

RESPIRATION

- Catarrhal deafness (ear-drops).
- Influenza, chills.
- Lung congestion, dullness of the mind, pallid complexion.
- Catarrh of the elderly and feeble.
- Seasonal allergic asthma.

DIGESTION

- Lack of appetite; anorexia nervosa (decoction to produce an aromatic bitter).

- Gastritis, dyspepsia, stomach pain, heartburn, sour stomach, hyperacidity, nausea, vomiting (infusion for excess activity, pain).
- Intestinal gas, *colic*, diarrhea (tincture for cramping).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Liver insufficiency; increases digestion and metabolism of oil and production of bile, secretion of bile, hence digestion and nutrition; elevates blood sugar.
- Viral hepatitis.
- Asthenia, anemia, wasting; deficient immunity associated with hepatic insufficiency.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM AND BLOOD

- Strengthens the heart; poor peripheral circulation; cold, pale, sometimes purple hands and feet.
- High and low blood pressure.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Increases urination.

FEMALE

- Menses; excessive bleeding, cramping, or amenorrhea with weakness.
- Middle-aged women, full-figured, with blood stagnation, veins blue/green/yellow and sometimes gray; with cysts, excess bleeding.

MALE

- Prostate problems.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, gout; joints stiff, extremities cold; fingers purple.
- Muscular cramps, spasms, nerve problems, epilepsy.

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- *Bruises, blue/yellow/green/gray*.

FEVER

- Intermittent fever; chills and fever.

OTHER

- Angelica root worn around the neck for protection against psychic and epidemic contagion in many traditional societies.
- Helps stop craving for tobacco and alcohol.
- Lipoma (angelica oil externally; cf. *Salvia, Stellaria*).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The roots are hard to dry and easily turn rancid. They should be cut lengthwise, rapidly dried in a heated stove, crushed, and stored airtight. Under these circumstances they last 3–4 years. Tea of the root is made from 1 teaspoonful macerated overnight in 1 cup of water. In the morning it is warmed up. One-third is taken as a dose before every meal. The seeds easily lose their properties; freezing preserves them and promotes germination. The leaves and the stalks are of less potency (Harald Tietze, 1996, 38). The constituents have varying solubility, so they are brought out by different preparation methods. Boiling the root produces an aromatic bitter, steeping produces an anesthetic and astringent for the stomach lining, alcohol improves the relaxing, antispasmodic properties (Michael Moore). Extract the recently dried root in high percentage alcohol. Dose: 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day, or more in acute conditions (Matthew Wood).

CAUTIONS:

Not to be taken during pregnancy. It can irritate the stomach and kidneys. The furanocoumarins can cause photosensitivity and can

irritate the skin in sensitive individuals. They are not easily extracted in water. Sunbathing should be limited when angelica is in use (German E Commission; Bisset and Wichtl, 1994). Small doses are relaxing. Excessive doses can cause depression of the central nervous system.

TOXICITY:

Talalaj and Czechowicz (1989, 46) report of *Angelica atropurpurea* that the "fresh root is exceedingly toxic, and it is used as a homicidal poison among Canadian Indians." I was loath to credit this as possible, yet Horton Howard (1836, II:216) writes of the *Angelica atropurpurea* specifically, "The fresh root is said to be poisonous, which is dissipated in drying." There is, of course, a terrific poison in Canada and the northern United States, *Cicuta virosa*, that looks somewhat like its cousin *Angelica*.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (31), Nicholas Culpeper, Rudolf Weiss (1), Stephen Buhner (4), Julia Graves (1, 5), Ellen Evert Hopman (1), David Winston (1), J. V. Cerney (9), Matthew Wood (1-confirmed, 2, 3, 6, 7, 20, 26, 29), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 30), W. T. Fernie (13, 16, 17, 32), Harald Tietze (32), Michael Moore (15, 16, 17).

Anthemis nobilis. Chamomile.

Considered to have the same properties as *Chamomilla recutita*.

Aphanes arvensis. Parsley Piert.

This small plant is little known or used in North American herbalism but commands respect in Great Britain, where it is native. It is a member of

the rose family.

Maude Grieve (1931, 615) writes, “This species is still in high repute with herbalists, and has been used for many centuries for its action on stone in the bladder, on account of which it was given the name of ‘Parsley Breakstone’ and ‘Parsley Piercestone,’ which has been corrupted into Parsley Piert, the ‘parsley’ referring to the form of its cut-into leaves, not to any relationship to the true Parsley.” It is akin to lady’s mantle, hence the names *Alchemilla arvensis* and field lady’s mantle. “Its chief employment is in gravel, stone, dropsy, and generally for complaints of the bladder and kidneys. Acting directly on the parts affected, it is found very valuable, even in apparently incurable cases. It operates violently, but safely, by urine and also removes obstructions of the liver, being therefore useful in jaundice.” Culpeper (1653) writes, “It will bring away gravel from the kidneys insensibly and without pain. It cures strangury.” Derby herbalist George Slack (1919, 115) writes that he “has cured many bad cases of gravel and stone with this and pellitory of the wall.” It is classified as a demulcent, astringent, and diuretic. The whole herb is used fresh or dried. It is often combined with urinary stimulants or mucilages for better effect.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

“The whole plant is used in infusion of an ounce of the dried herb or two ounces of the green.” 1–2 wineglassesful, 3x/day (Neil, 1998, 75).

Apium graveolens. Celery Seed.

The seed of the wild celery, native to wet, salty ground near the sea in southern Europe, is a powerful medicinal agent. It is a member of the apiaceae or parsley family. In addition to high levels of sodium, it contains calcium, essential oils (many and complex, but especially the

cooling limonene and the diuretic apiol), essential fatty acids, phenols, flavonoids, and furanocoumarins.

Celery seed is generally looked upon as a cooling and sedative diuretic. The apiol and sodium stimulate the kidneys. The improvement in kidney function, though due to stimulation (warming), is overall cooling to the body. It removes irritable deposits of calcium and uric acid in the body. Christopher Menzies-Trull (2003, 446) classifies it as a "uric acid solvent diuretic."

Celery is indicated for arthritis, inflammatory heat, dryness, aches, pains, and irritability of the tissues. It also probably helps the cartilage in the joints. Like many salty emollients it penetrates into calcified or hard deposits, breaks them up, brings material back into the bloodstream and out through the kidneys, while increasing the flow of water through cartilage and joint, which is essential for their cleansing and feeding. Celery also contains furanocoumarins that thin the blood and improve the circulation. That would help the hard-to-reach connective tissue, which lies just outside the periphery of the circulatory system—cartilage is not directly sanguinated. Celery has been found to lower blood pressure like medical diuretics and perhaps adjusts sodium imbalances that influence angiotensin levels. It is overall cooling, thinning, cleansing, diuretic, and antiseptic.

The primary use of celery seed (and even the stalks) is to remove arthritis, gout, and rheumatic complaints. One author went so far as to write that a diet of celery made "rheumatism impossible" (Gibson Ward, quoted by W. T. Fernie, 1914, 86). Dr. Jim Duke has confirmed, in modern herbalism, the use of celery seed on himself and others, in this regard.

Traditional herbal literature paints a picture of sympathetic excess and tension. Maude Grieve (1931, 182) writes that it is "useful in hysteria, promoting restfulness and sleep, and diffusing through the system a mild sustaining influence. Good combined with scutellaria for nervous cases with loss of tone." It has been used in panic attacks. Dorothy Hall (1988) relates that celery seed is indicated in

people with strong but conflicted will power. They are anxious for others, busy, conscientious, high paced, “hot and bothered.” William Boericke (1927, 64) gives a short mental profile: “feeling of fidgets.” Norman Grainger Bisset and Max Wichtl (1994, 82) report folk use for “nervous restlessness” and scientific classification as a sedative and antispasmodic. David Hoffmann (2003, 528) recommends it particularly for “rheumatoid arthritis associated with mental depression.”

Celery has been found to be antineoplastic in some circumstances. Like a number of remedies that have been used to remove tumors, celery seed is also abortifacient. This property is even found in the edible celery stalks, if large amounts are eaten.

TASTE:

salty, slightly pungent, slightly bitter • cool, moist

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Restlessness, sleeplessness, nervousness; brain debilitated from overwork or excitement.
- Anxiety, concern, guilt, irritability, conflicted will.
- Hot and bothered.
- Idleness is unpleasant; depression, melancholy.
- Busy, conscientious, overpaced.
- Emotional blackmailers.

HEAD

- Headache, throbbing; neuralgia.

RESPIRATION

- Eyes hot, burning, dry; hay feverish look; strengthens the eyesight.
- Colds, influenza, bronchitis, asthma; ticklish dry cough.
- Chronic respiratory insufficiency; asthma, emphysema.

DIGESTION

- Lack of appetite, halitosis, flatulence, heartburn, hiccoughs, vomiting.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Hepatic disorders, jaundice, ascites.
- Chronic weakness, assists detoxification.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

- Hypertension.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Diabetics with water retention.
- Urinary tract; inflammation, infection, bladder retention.
- Kidney weakness; albuminuria, stones, edema.
- Better from drinking and immersing in water.
- Tissues atonic, water-logged, weight gain increasing with stress load.
- Swelling and water retention worse from stress and concern.

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea.
- Pregnancy: heartburn and weight gain (small doses only).

MALE

- Irritated prostate.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Aches and pains better from warm water, worse from cold water.
- Arthritis, pain; chiefly around joints and large bone ends.
- Rheumatoid arthritis, gout, sciatica, muscle spasm.

SKIN

- Bruised leaves have been applied to the feet in panic attacks.
- Eczema; itching, burning, blotches.
- Cancers, tumors (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Tincture or extract of the seed. The root is also sometimes used. The boiled root produces a jelly. The vegetable can be eaten in large amounts for the medicinal effect but mark that it is abortifacient. Celery is potentiated by dandelion (Menzies-Trull).

CAUTIONS:

Although everyone usually thinks of celery as safe, since both seed and stalk are eaten, there are a number of cautions. Some people are allergic to celery, experiencing shortness of breath and swelling of the face (Fernie, 1914). Also, the plant, like many members of the apiaceae family, is abortifacient. Even the vegetable, eaten in large quantities, can sometimes have this effect—I have known this to occur. The volatile oils work as an irritating diuretic on the kidneys (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994). Therefore, like juniper, celery is contraindicated in acute inflammation or any kind of heat involving the kidneys.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (15, 21), Maude Grieve (1, 23), Dorothy Hall (2–6, 8, 11, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25), James Duke (25), Rex Moore (27), Julia

Graves (16), Christopher Menzies-Trull (1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 26, 28, 29), William Boericke (1, 4, 7, 9, 11, 28), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (10, 13, 17), W. T. Fernie (7, 25, 26).

Arctium lappa. Burdock.

One would expect burdock to have a long history of use in medicine, but a review of traditional literature shows that it was little used until the eighteenth century, when it started its career as a diuretic and "blood purifier." Some specific indications are found in the eclectic literature in the nineteenth century, but it was not widely used until the twentieth, when it finally appeared in many formulations—still as an alterative or blood purifier. As far as I know, the use of burdock as a specific, and the accumulation of a list of specific indications, have awaited my own hand. Burdock is a member of the Asteraceae family. It contains lignans, bitter priniciples, inulin (starch), mucilage, sugars, pectin, minerals including sulphur, and organic acids.

Burdock root is bitter, sweet, and oily. It is therefore well suited to dry/atrophic conditions where there is a need to increase secretions, tissue feeding, and tissue cleansing. The bitters stimulate secretion in the digestive tract. The oils increase secretion of bile, promoting better absorption of fats and oils through the small intestine, better activity of the gallbladder, and increased processing of oils by the liver. Burdock root is called for when there is poor secretion of bile, indicated by dry stool and constipation and poor emulsification of fats and oils. With low absorption of lipids there is a shortage of these substances around the body. Burdock is thus associated with dry, scaly skin conditions and dry skin in general. Sometimes the sebaceous glands get blocked, due to a lack of oil moving through them, resulting in inflammation—hence the association of burdock with acne and boils. The sinuses and lungs are also dry and the secretion through the kidneys is limited.

Burdock seed is more diuretic and diffusive than the root. It is particularly used when the skin and kidneys are involved. It is suited to “affection of the kidneys, such as atrophy or wasting away,” writes Richard Hool (1922, 17). This occurs with dry tissues, though there are local areas of water retention—edema. “When the water cannot move, some of it gets stuck,” comments Phyllis Light. “The virtue is diuretic,” proclaims John Hill (1740, 97), “and is very powerfully so. It has cured dropsies alone.” Samuel Henry (1814, 63) calls burdock root “diuretica mundificans.”

Henry also recommended burdock root highly in syphilis, a condition for which it was long used. “For the benefit of our poor gallant, but unfortunate seamen, &c. I shall reveal my celebrated antivenereal remedy, by the use of which I have cured numbers both in its recent and fourth stage, without the use of mercury.” Burdock root, one pound; yellow dock root half a pound; yarrow half a pound; parsley roots and leaves half a pound; comfrey four ounces. Boil in eight quarts of water, down to one gallon. “When it is to be carried to sea in warm weather” add gin. A gill to be taken 3x/day.

The liver is also affected by burdock. With a lack of fats and oils, there is reduced anabolism of lipids for the body to use, with wasting and dryness. In order to get nutrition there may be dependence on “quick fixes” of sugar. Thus, it is a remedy for sugar imbalances. Because steroid and sex hormones are made from oil and require oil for transmission through the body, and all hormones of any kind require adequate fluids for movement, burdock comes up as something of an endocrine and female remedy.

Burdock has a powerful action on the skin. This is attributed to its influence on the liver and blood. Here is a case history from Derby herbalist George Slack (1919, 107). “The author once cured a man who was suffering from boils and abscesses nearly all over his body with burdock and yarrow made into a strong decoction, and drunk freely. He had been ill five months, and was given up to die; but in one month he was restored.” Here is another case history from Lise Wolff, registered herbalist (AHG), of Minneapolis. A three-and-a-half-year-old girl was diagnosed with ichthyosis. The skin was

flaking off all over the body in large patches and was dry, hot, and red. If she got hot the skin became red and peeled off. Fever turned the skin bright red. She would get cranky and irritable when it itched and couldn't sleep at night. Healthy birth, no medications, no antibiotics. *Chamomilla* (for the attitude), 2 drops, *Arctium radix*, 2 drops, *Salvia officinalis*, 2 drops; 3x/day. Two months later the skin is slightly flaky, in fine, small flakes, the hands are still inflamed, sleeps fine, less irritable.

Dorothy Hall (1988) recommends burdock for conditions where the skin is broken open and weeping an exudate, but I would still maintain that this is in cases that are intrinsically dry—the weeping is due to water that can't get out through the skin and kidneys in the healthy fashion.

Burdock, with its brown, fur-like burs, could be classified in American Indian medicine as a "bear medicine." Indeed, such an application in ancient Eurasia is indicated by the name *arctium*, from the Greek *arctos* (bear). The oily bear medicines usually stimulate the gallbladder, liver, thyroid, and adrenocortical functions, encouraging the digestion and metabolism of fats and proteins. The metabolism of the bear, which swings greatly from winter hibernation to summer feeding, is dependent on these organs for storage and utilization of fats and proteins.

David Hoffmann (2003, 528) uses an arresting expression in his discussion of burdock. It will "move the body to a state of integration and health." Burdock helps to restore the primal blueprint of health, so to speak, when it has been lost in persons suffering from long, chronic illness. It was thus once an important remedy for syphilis, a disease that attacks the basic integrative forces of life, the primal essence, or genetic material, and the hard and supportive structures of the body.

TASTE:

(root) sweet, bitter, pungent • warm • oily
(seed) bitter, pungent, sweet • warm • diffusive

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Heat, dryness, lack of oil.
- Thin, withered persons with dry skin and scalp.
- Emotionally stoic; phlegmatic about pain.
- Tired, debilitated, worn out.
- *Worried*.

HEAD

- *Dry scalp with red, scaly patches and hair loss*.
- Headache, frontal, with dry sinus.

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory conditions with dry mucosa; allergies, sinusitis, bronchitis.

DIGESTION, *LIVER*, AND GALLBLADDER

- Lack of secretion in the upper gastrointestinal tract (seed).
- Lack of lubrication in the lower gastrointestinal tract; *constipation* (root).
- *Poor glandular function; lymphatics, pancreas, endocrine, prostate, liver, spleen*.
- Liver and gallbladder congestion; gallstones.
- *Blood sugar lability*.

FEMALE

- Uterine prolapse; with tired feet.
- *Pregnancy: balancing and nutritive during; helps prevent water retention and jaundice in babies*.

MALE

- Specific for swollen prostate in men who lift weights incorrectly.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- *Leaches out concretions, kidney stones, arthritis*.
- *Edema*.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Arthritis, bursitis; better from movement; worse when immobilized*.
- Lower part of spine stiff.
- Sciatica; unbearable at night.
- Gouty pain.
- Better from movement, exercise, bending, open air; worse from inactivity, closed, warm room.
- *Carpal tunnel syndrome*.

FEVER

- *Fever with excessive oily sweating and worry*.

SKIN

- Profuse underarm sweat.
- *Dry or oily skin, acne, eczema, dandruff; boils, abscesses, poison ivy, rashes, itching, measles, psoriasis* (tincture internally, leaf externally).
- Retention of water in persons who are generally dry; swelling in the upper thighs and across the belly and the upper eyelids, with bags under the eyes, absence of perspiration, the skin is trying to conserve water.
- *Pulse thin*.
- *Boils, abscesses, carbuncles*.
- Single large pimples that are not coming to a head at the surface.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The root is used for chronic conditions, the seed (or fructs, actually) in acute. A biennial, the roots are dug at the end of the first year. The seeds are harvested just after the end of the second year, before the plant is completely dead. The leaves are sometimes used externally as a poultice. The roots, high in oils, easily go rancid and need to be dried with artificial heat and left in the open air. They extract well in alcohol. Brandy brings out the nice bittersweet flavor. Dose: 3–60 drops, 1–3x/day. The dried root and seeds may be used by decoction as a tea. One teaspoon of ground root to 1 cup of boiling water.

CAUTIONS:

Widely used as a food. May cause allergic reactions in a few people allergic to asteraceae plants. Has caused skin outbreaks in some people; perhaps a cleansing effect.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (9, 10, 14, 18, 21, 27, 30), W. T. Fernie (4), Nicholas Culpeper (14), Jack Ritchason (15), John King, John Hill (17), William Boericke (14, 21), Dorothy Hall (3, 14, 19–23), Cyril Boger (1, 25), Matthew Wood (3, 4, 5, 6, 29, 30), Julia Graves (31), Lise Wolff (7, 8, 14), Phyllis Light (11, 13, 17, 28), Margi Flint (15), Harvey Felter (2).

Armoracia rusticana. Horseradish, Daikon.

Horseradish is a very hot member of an already hot family, the cruciferae or cabbage clan. It has been in cultivation from such an early time that its exact origins are unknown. It is perhaps native to eastern Europe, where it is widely appreciated as a condiment, but it is now widely grown, eaten, and used as a medicine throughout the world. Under the name daikon *it is an important condiment in Japanese*

cooking and was reintroduced into modern American herbal usage by Michio Kushi.

Fresh horseradish roots are so stimulating that they will cause redness, irritation, and blistering of the part to which they have been applied. They contain a volatile oil also found in mustard. Thus, horseradish roots are used like mustard as a poultice to the chest to stimulate expectoration and to thin stuck phlegm in pneumonia (see *Cautions*). They have also been used as an irritant to raise a blister on arthritic joints and neuralgic pains. This is a very ancient method of treatment. Dr. Bernard Aschner (1957) gives more than a hundred case histories of arthritis and neuralgia cured by the application of an irritant on the joint or part—he used a cantharis compound. The blister is then lanced to remove the "toxins." The effect may also have to do with increasing the cortisol in the area.

Taken internally horseradish in modest doses is a powerful stimulant, aperient, and antiseptic for the stomach. It is traditionally taken with oily, rich meat or food, by itself or steeped in vinegar. It is a powerful diuretic that has been employed to remove calculus and edema. The "chief powers" of horseradish roots "are expended upon the kidneys and skin, and they gradually raise the general capillary and then the arterial circulation; but a considerable portion of their influence is expended upon the stomach, and some upon the gall-ducts and the secretions generally," writes William Cook (1869, 370). "The roots arouse a gentle warmth and fair gastric secretion in the stomach; and are good in decidedly atonic, viscid, and semi-paralyzed conditions of that organ. It steadily increases the flow of urine, and the amount of insensible perspiration; procures warmth of the surface, and greater fullness and firmness of the pulse, and favors an increase of alvine action."

Horseradish is specifically indicated in cold and depressed conditions. Dr. Cook is very specific about its general indications and contraindications. "It is useful only in very sluggish conditions; and should not be given in any case of local or arterial excitement,

nor to sensitive patients. The manner in which it arouses the general casting out of excretions, makes it peculiarly useful in all half-paralyzed and viscid conditions, where accumulations of tenacious mucus clog" the channels of elimination. "Such conditions are common in dropsy; and are also met in some cases of jaundice and rheumatism. The article is most suitable in chronic cases; though a warm infusion used very freely, the patient being well covered, will usually incite a remarkably copious diaphoresis, and may be given in dropsies." It is used as a stimulant in recent colds (sometimes with cayenne or bayberry bark).

TASTE:

pungent • hot

TISSUE STATES:

depression, torpor

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Sluggish, torpid conditions, viscid, tenacious mucus.
- Sinusitis (internally, often in combination with capsicum and myrica; externally, a poultice of freshly grated horseradish on a piece of cloth applied to the forehead or checks; causes skin irritation, which increases local circulation and healing; avoid contact with the eyes; put Vaseline on the eyes).
- Relaxed sore throat; loss of voice.
- Indigestion after a fatty meal (grated fresh root; root preserved in vinegar).
- Jaundice.
- Edema, kidney stones (decoction of the fresh root).
- Depression and torpor of the female tract; vaginitis, odors, itching (poultice of the dried leaves soaked in water).

- Rheumatism, arthritis.
- Fever (hot infusion of the freshly grated root as a diaphoretic).
- Pulse low, weak, obscure.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The roots picked in the fall are hotter. They can be saved in sand, in a cool environment during the winter. One-half to 1 dram of the grated root can be given 3x/day. Prepared fresh, or preserved in vinegar, wine, or brandy.

CAUTIONS:

Burns skin and eyes on contact. Do not place fresh horseradish directly on skin. Use a cloth between.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, William Cook (1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10), W. T. Fernie (3, 8, 9), Otto Wolff (2), Michio Kushi (4, 6, 7, 9), Maude Grieve.

Artemisia absinthium. Wormwood.

Wormwood is a member of the artemisia genus of the Asteraceae family. It is native to disturbed ground in Europe and Asia, though widely naturalized in North America. It flourishes around old walls, broken foundations, and overused pastures. It is one of Nature's promises that out of devastation life will spring up anew. It was anciently known as absinthium. Wormwood contains flavonoids, phenolic acids, lignans, bitter sesquiterpene lactones, acetylenes, and volatile oils (including the toxic thujone).

Wormwood was one of the most important herbs in the medieval European materia medica. Hildegard von Bingen cites it as the most important herb, Leonard Fuchs placed it on the first page of his herbal, and Nicholas Culpeper uses it as his example herb for illustrating various astrological and archetypal concepts.

Wormwood has long been used as an aromatic bitter tonic for stimulating the digestion. This usage is justified by the taste, pharmacology, and tradition. According to Galen it liquefies and

washes the “bad humors retained in the stomach,” causing them to descend, after which the stomach “contracts and strengthens.” To effect the descent of humors retained on the walls of the stomach mix “honey water with absynthium” (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:321, 316). This usage is attested by authors down to the nineteenth century. “As a tonic and appetizer it is far-famed,” wrote New Zealand herbalist James Neil (1998, 25) in 1891. He testifies: “While in Chicago we visited the office of a very wise old eclectic doctor” who used wormwood for “impaired appetite; it makes them eat well.” Neil treats us to a case history. “Some time ago a person from Oamaru was troubled with indigestion, so badly that he lost flesh and became very weak. He was recommended an infusion of this plant with [white] horehound; the effect was a return of health.” An Australian author, Harald Tietze (1996, 46), writes, “No other herb works so quickly to relieve heartburn, indigestion, gastritis, or liver congestion.” These usages are still credited to wormwood in European phytotherapy. The German E Commission cites wormwood as a remedy for loss of appetite and stomach disorders resulting from insufficient production of stomach acid (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 47).

Wormwood also acts farther in from the GI tract, upon the liver and gallbladder. Culpeper (1653): “The sun never shone upon a better herb for the yellow jaundice than this.”

Maurice Mességué mentions a case in which wormwood restored the urge to life in a young woman suffering from hopelessness. This is very much how I see the use of the plant. In my first book, *Seven Herbs* (1987), I described the use of sagebrush *(Artemisia tridentata)* for people suffering from devastation, hopelessness, destitution, poverty, abuse, and unwinnable situations. I now use wormwood for this mental state because it is easier for me to obtain.

Wormwood is also to be thought of as a remedy where the hopelessness is due to severe physical trauma. I helped a woman whose life had been severely damaged by a truck-on-car collision thirty years previous. The other passengers in the car died; she survived with constant, excruciating pain. Marital problems made her life even more difficult. Wormwood in small internal doses, and

in large external doses on the scar tissue on her legs and the painful joints, returned her to functioning health and she was very grateful. A similar case history, with a relatively complete recovery, is reported by Medicine Grizzlybear Lake (1991, 149).

Wormwood has survived in modern American herbalism largely as a medicine for the muscular and skeletal system—reminding us of its cousin arnica. A strong decoction of wormwood is a "very strengthening application for bruises and sprains" (Child, 1837, 103). "It makes a good fomentation in sprains, rheumatism, and other sub-acute difficulties about the joints; and in bruises and local congestions" (Cook, 1869, 270). Dr. John Christopher included wormwood in his bone, flesh, and cartilage formula.

A wide number of uses are recorded by Lake (1991, 149), who has used it on "numerous occasions." This includes a bath for children with diaper rash, or for adults with jock itch and athlete's foot, children and animals with pin worms, scabies, and skin rashes. Also externally in a poultice for bursitis, torn ligaments, sprains, broken bones, cranial fractures, and arthritis.

Wormwood is suited to people who have been brutalized by the reverses of life, including poverty and abuse. It is effective where there is physical malnutrition. It is indicated for coldness and depression in the autonomic nervous system, hence a deep depression of the vital forces of digestion and of life in general. The lack of digestive energy and the general coldness and lifelessness may cause atrophy and it is indicated in thin, scrawny, weak, malnourished individuals. I have also used it for large, water-logged, stiff people with success.

Wormwood had an ancient reputation against pests of various kinds. It was classified as a vermifuge. James Neil (1998, 25) qualifies this: "Experience has proved that it is weak in this respect. It makes a very good injection in seat or pin worms, which infest the lower bowels," but does not live up to its name for more potent parasites. Culpeper (1653) gives wormwood a very odd property: mixed with ink it repels mice and rats, so they will not eat the paper written on. In the closet it protects against moths, he says.

Culpeper (1653) relates the following curious story about Mars and wormwood. “When Mars was free from war, (for he loves to be fighting, and is the best friend a soldier hath) I say, when Mars was free from war, he called a council of war in his own brain, to know how he should do poor sinful man good, desiring to forget his abuses in being called an unfortunate [planet]. He musters up his own forces, and places them in battalia. ‘Oh,’ quoth he, ‘why do I hurt a poor silly man or woman?’ His angel answers him, ‘It is because they have offended their God.’ (Look back to Adam.) ‘Well,’ says Mars, ‘though they speak evil of me, I will do good to them: Death’s cold, my herb shall heat them; they are full of ill humours (else they would never have spoken ill of me), my herb will cleanse them, and dry them: they are poor weak creatures, my herb shall strengthen them; they are dull witted, my herb shall fortify their apprehensions.’ And among astrologers all this does not deserve a good word: Oh the patience of Mars!” Culpeper ranked wormwood warm and dry in the first degree with his predecessors. Yet this story shows that he used wormwood in both dampness and dry/atrophy.

TASTE:

bitter • warm • fragrant

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Chronic depression, lack of affect, deadness, hopelessness;* helps a person dream solutions.
- Sleep disturbed, restless, wakes in a convulsion or trance; “night terrors.”

HEAD

- Clenches the jaw; earaches, headaches.

DIGESTION

- *Loss of appetite*.
- Bad breath, putrid taste, putrid eructations, flatulence.
- *Inactive stomach and intestines*.
- *Nausea, morning sickness, heartburn*.
- *Malnutrition, wasting, atrophy, debility*.
- *Constipation*.
- Pin worms.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Hepatitis (external).
- Weakness of the gallbladder; lack of bile, lack of digestion, constipation.
- *Obstruction of the liver and gallbladder;* jaundice (juice of the large leaves growing from the root, John Hill).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema ("juice of the large leaves … which grow from the root, before the stalk appears," John Hill).

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea, infertility.
- Menstruation: cramps in slender, cold, stiff, atrophic women (cf. *Artemisia vulgaris*).
- Parturition: painful.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Stiff and cold; lower back pain.
- *Joint pain; arthritis; sore, bruised feeling*.
- *Sprains and strains; muscles weak, stiff, cold, sore*.
- *Arthritis, rheumatism*, gout.

FEVER

- Chills and fever with lack of perspiration.
- Ague, intermittent chills and fever (the tops, with the flowers on them).

WOUNDS

- Boils, eczema, scabies, skin rashes, diaper rash, jock itch, athlete's foot.

OTHER

- Externally to reduce hair loss.
- Hangover.
- *Very specific when there is hardness in the middle pulse on the left hand (liver/gallbladder position)*.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Large doses are toxic because of the thujone. In my experience it is sometimes wise to give this remedy in extremely limited doses (1 drop per day or week) in order not to cause depression. Large doses disorder the stomach. Sir John Hill (1740, 390) instructed the use of small doses to avoid the wretched bitterness. "The tops of the plant are to be used fresh gathered, a very slight infusion of them is excellent for all disorders of the stomach, and will prevent sickness after meals, and create an appetite; but if it be made strong, it will not only be disagreeable to the taste, but will disgust the stomach." James Neil (1998, 25) wrote, "Very large doses or long continued will weaken the stomach, cause headaches, etc."

Contemporary Australian herbalist Harald Tietze (1996, 46), who is very precise in his indications for herbal teas, recommends 1–2 cups of the tea a week, made by pouring a quarter liter of boiling water over a half a teaspoonful of the dried herb, steep for 5 minutes. Dose: 1/3 cup before a meal. The German E Commission

gives the average dose as 1–3 grams a day in aqueous infusion (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994).

John Hill considered the tops (flowers and leaves) and the bottom leaves to have slightly different properties. The former are vermifuge and antimalarial whereas the latter are opening, diaphoretic, and diuretic.

TOXICITY:

Wormwood was formerly used in the manufacture of vermouth, but persistent doses were believed to cause mental illness. This is thought to be the origin of some of the mental problems of the early impressionist painters, such as Vincent Van Gogh. The thujone was supposed to be the culprit; it penetrates the blood/brain barrier. It is a toxin to the brain and causes convulsion resulting in nausea and stomach disorder. (This, however, testifies to its organ affinity to the stomach.) For these reasons wormwood was long banned for internal consumption in the USA and in some other countries. However, it is recommended by the German E Commission, and was recently reinstated as an alcoholic drink in the U.S.

Fortunately, aqueous extracts (tea) do not take up much of the thujone. A cup of the tea can be used, but only for a few days or a week. The tincture can be therapeutic in small doses. I use extremely small amounts—1 drop a week is sufficient for the depressed mental state, in my experience. More than this can cause depression from bringing up issues too quickly. The very small dose, on the other hand, brings issues up for processing and relief at a reasonable rate. Wormwood can also be applied externally but the bitterness is needed internally for the digestive symptoms and probably even the mental state. Occasional large doses can be very beneficial, but are not legal.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Father Sebastian Kneipp (5, 6), Nicholas Culpeper (1, 2, 4, 5–13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 26), John Christopher, Harald Tietze (7), William Cook, Matthew Wood (1, 2, 3, 8, 27), Medicine Grizzlybear Lake (24), John Hill (13, 14), Maurice Mességué (1), Louise Tenney (3, 4, 7–13, 15, 19), James Neil (4, 10), W. T. Fernie (5).

Artemisia annua. Sweet Annie.

Sweet Annie is an annual artemisia native to China, but widely grown and naturalized. It is a traditional medicine that has caught the attention of modern science because of its effectiveness and safety in the treatment of malaria and other diseases dependent on microorganisms. It contains essential oils, hence the name "sweet," flavonoids, and a sesquiterpene lactone, artemisinin, that bonds with parasite proteins, and is antimalarial and antineoplastic. The dried herb is used.

Artemisia dracunculus. Tarragon.

Tarragon ("little dragon") may be called the "mild artemisia," since it does not have the extremely bitter taste of its cousins. It contains coumarin and volatile oils and has a "diffusive" taste—that is, it produces a mild tingle on the tongue. It is better known for its culinary properties than as a medicinal. It is used to make a vinegar. As a medicinal herb it is used to promote appetite, secretion of bile and digestion juices (Dan Kenner and Yves Requena, 2001, 113).

Artemisia vulgaris. Mugwort.

Mugwort is another Eurasian plant of very ancient medicinal usage. It is called the oldest of plants (yldost wyrta) *in the* Charm of the Nine Worts, *an ancient Anglo-Saxon leech book. It finds a place in the pharmacopoeia of Europe, India, and China. The name mugwort was originally motherwort, according to Aemilius Macer (tenth century). The word mother here means the uterus. The Latin binomial associates it with Artemis, goddess of the moon and mother of nature. Mugwort shines in the moonlight and affects dreaming. It contains flavonoids, sesquiterpene lactones, triterpenes, coumarin derivatives, and volatile oils. It is not quite as bitter as its cousin wormwood.*

Mugwort is an important medicine in traditional European and Asian medicine. The taste and pharmacology emphasize its action as an aromatic bitter, which increases digestion by stimulating digestive and bile secretion, thus enhancing nutrition. It is less

active as a vermifuge than many of its artemisia cousins. It is mildly stimulating to the nervous system, reducing tension, hence improving autonomic regulation of the digestion, and increasing circulation and nutrition in the nerves and muscles. It has long been used in traditional medicine to induce the menstrual flow.

In traditional medicine the association of mugwort with women and the menses is emphasized. “What is Venus but the Artemisia that grows in your garden?” asks Paracelsus. Contemporary herbalist Susun Weed, emphasizing a different epoch of female life, calls it “cronewort.” It is suited to young, middle-aged, and older women, to the “feminine instincts” and allied faculties—intuition, art, creativity, dream—and to the feminine side of men. Artemis (who was a sort of tomboy goddess) is the protector of virgins and women suffering from illness. “It is in greatest Esteem amongst Midwives and Nurses,” wrote John Quincy (1736).

Herbalist William LeSassier considered mugwort to be especially suited to weak, sensitive women, or those who have been through abuse, poverty, obstetric injury, difficult pregnancies, and abortions with scar tissue in the womb. There can be a “withdrawal of spiritual aspirations from the womb, from sex.” This may occur in conjunction with anger, frustration, bitchiness, depression, deadness, lack of affect. It is restorative when there has been obstetric injury, abortion, abuse, poverty, deprivation. It is as if the male part has rushed ahead to protect the injured female part. Mugwort is restorative to the injured female nature.

In European phytotherapy mugwort is considered to stimulate secretion of the pituitary sex hormones (FSH and LH). It is indicated in insufficiency of the corpus luteum from anemia (Dan Kenner and Yves Requena, 2001, 112). Independently, both herbalist Isla Burgess, of New Zealand, and myself came to the conclusion that mugwort is a remedy for excessive androgenism. That would indeed be a condition where the masculine has raced ahead and the female is behind. In hyperandrogenism we often see frustration, anger, depression, lack of affect (deadness) or excessive affect, susceptibility to chills or a general chilliness, with sore, cold joints and pains, especially in the lower back, pelvis, and uterus,

infertility, menstrual disorder, blood sugar imbalances, abdominal weight gain (in lean, thin women and men), polycystic ovarian disease, and infertility. In many of these conditions, mugwort will prove remedial.

Although one would think that excess androgen would overstimulate heat processes in the body, in my experience it tends to bring on conditions of chill and fever. It is as if cold were stuck in the system and the heat is trying to drive it out, resulting in chill/fever, or what the old doctors called “intermittent fever.” Such conditions are especially associated with autonomic stress in the liver, gallbladder, and stomach. Thus, there may be digestive, assimilative, and nutritive problems. The muscles are weak and malnourished, subject to bouts of cold, soreness, pain, and spasm. There may be scar tissue interfering with muscular movement and nutrition. These symptoms are similar to those one would associate with mugwort’s cousin, wormwood. However, there is more of a female emphasis with mugwort and more of a gallbladder/digestive influence with wormwood.

In Chinese herbalism fibers from the leaves of mugwort are rolled into moxa sticks and burned as “moxibustion.” The glowing sticks are placed over cold, stiff joints and cold areas to increase warmth and circulation. They can be used skillfully in two different ways. Applied close, moxibustion causes burning and blistering, which brings the blood to the surface. This stimulates local cortisone reaction in joints. It also draws toxins out of the connective tissue in the joints, which are hard to flush, since they do not receive direct circulation of blood, but are nourished and flushed by squeezing and use of the joints. (Blistering is an ancient and widespread practice for the relief of arthritis; see Bernard Aschner, 1957.) When the moxibustion is applied further away from the skin, causing the area to warm up but not to blister, blood is drawn into the connective tissue and the deeper parts of the joints to relieve lack of nutrition and strength in the joints. Blistering is better in surplus conditions, where the toxins need to be brought out, whereas warming is better in deficiency conditions, where the deep connective tissue needs to be nourished.

A specific pulse indication for mugwort has been described by Eliot Cowan. In a weak pulse the beat is usually weaker on the left hand and stronger on the right, but in a mugwort person it is the other way around—and this is unusual. Cowan calls it “wife before husband.” It indicates that the yin has been damaged, so the yang within the yin rises up too strong.

Randolph Stone (1986, 2:210) describes this same pulse: “a weak right pulse and a stronger left pulse.” He takes it as evidence of an imbalance between male and female polarities. “It is like the male energy going to war, without the feminine checks, causing devastation and famine.” The brain, spinal cord, and autonomic nervous centers along the cord are in a state of hunger for oxygen, nutrition, and circulation. Stone cautions the student not to draw the blood to the surface because that will make the situation get worse by depleting the deeper blood supply. There is a condition of “excessive capillary dilation.” Blood may stagnate in pools in the abdomen. This can cause stagnant blood or adhesions, with pain, stiffness, and cramp. This imbalance is the source of atonic conditions with exhaustion, mental instability, oversensitivity, and talkativeness. (Or, conversely, mugwort is withdrawn and asocial.) Note that moxibustion is contraindicated in this constitutional imbalance. This is an example of how a remedy used locally is damaging when it should be used constitutionally.

Mugwort acts strongly on the female system, increasing circulation to warm up the uterus and pelvic region, move the blood, remove stagnant blood (the source of cramps, stiffness, and pain), and regulate hormone levels. It has been traditionally used for violent menstrual cramps and epilepsy associated with birthing. Some have used it as a general menstrual cramp regulator. William Salmon (1710, 739) writes, “It provokes the terms powerfully, and facilitates the birth of women in labor, bringing away the afterbirth, and causing a due cleansing. It is good to expel a *Mola*, when the woman has gone beyond her time; as also the child when it is dead. It suppresses vapors [fits, hysteria connected with menstruation], being duly taken; and I have cured hysterick fits with it to

admiration; but then in these two last cases, it ought to be given in its own distilled water, or in fair spring water."

In Japan mugwort is pounded into glutinous rice to make a product called *gomogi mochi*. This food is used to provide stamina and is traditionally given to new mothers to stop postpartum bleeding and anemia, and to promote lactation (Dan Kenner and Yves Requena, 2001, 112).

Australian herbalist Dorothy Hall has developed an interesting profile of the mugwort constitution. It is suited to highly intelligent people with complex thoughts that are difficult to describe, speech disorders and dyslexia, highly elevated senses, sensitivity to light and sound, with great difficulty getting deep sleep. It is suited to people in whom the intuitive, psychic, psychological, creative, and artistic side of the mind is highly developed, but who have trouble with expression, or with the world around them. Independently I developed a similar profile for sagebrush *(Artemisia tridentatax)* and wormwood *(A. absinthium)* (see *Seven Herbs: Plants as Teachers*). Ironically, after some twenty years of practice, I have come to prefer the more mundane indications for the artemesias. These plants are exceptionally useful for physical complaints that, many times, appear independently of such fascinating constitutional perspectives. However, what has been reported by Dorothy Hall and myself about these remedies still remains true—they are beneficial for connecting the left and right sides of the brain and for complex psychological problems.

TASTE:

bitter • fragrant

TISSUE STATES:

depression, constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Highly intelligent, gifted, artistic people; heightened acuity of any or all of the five senses; but lacking common comprehension and skills.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Dyslexic, difficulty recognizing words but has complex thoughts.
- Can't remember the most simple words, names, but can describe complex, abstract, difficult concepts.
- Becomes angry or arrogant when others cannot follow his thought; enjoys silence and solitude from others; feels special or different.
- Speaking difficult; garbled, fast, mumbled, syllables or words reversed.
- Disorders of sleep and imagination: absorbed in the imagination, creative process, daydreaming, internal conversations; seems absent in another world.
- Body seems to be asleep, but mind is awake.
- When they do sleep deeply they have vivid dreams.
- Lies awake in bed, for long periods of time, thinking, imaging; sensitive to noise and light; sleepwalking.
- Springs up immediately from shallow sleep; or extremely tired, exhausted from lack of sleep.
- Chronic insomnia.

HEAD, EYES

- Eyes sensitive to the light; better from wearing sunglasses; worse from bright light.
- Worse from flickering fluorescent lights, camera flashes, strobe lights, low winter sun shining through trees, which can cause anger, absence, vagueness, petit-mal seizures, for a second or two.
- Epileptic seizures, with sensitivity to light, menstrual and parturitive problems, sleep disorders. Most effective in cases

where there are seizures several times a day; in young women with sensitive, weak constitutions.
- Irritation of the nervous system.
- Exhausted, restless, thrashing about.

DIGESTION

- Poor appetite, lack of bile and digestive secretion.
- Gastric fevers, typhoid, with nervous disturbances, spasmodic or benumbed.
- Constipation; spastic bowel; torsions, griping, and crampings.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Straining to make water; kidney stones and matter in the urine.
- *Stiff lower back, better from heat.*
- Stiff, tired, does not wish to mix with people.

FEMALE

- Violent menstrual pains at the beginning of menstruation.
- Weak, sensitive women.
- Women who have been through harshness, poverty, abuse, abortions, obstetric injuries; with stiff, cold lower back, joints; stiffness entering middle age.
- Adhesions in the uterus, from abortions or other problems, with menstrual difficulties.
- Uterus prolapsed, ruptured, injured (internal, or moxa).
- Profuse menstrual bleeding.
- PMS, not as much emotional as nervous; brings on the period.
- Labor; contractions violent and painful; miscarriage; increase of the lochial discharge.
- Expels the dead child, or defective embryo.

CIRCULATION

- Cold hands and feet (externally, the oil of the herb).
- Hardness in the pulse.

- Pulse: weak on the person's right arm and stronger on the left arm.
- Syncope.
- Hypotension.

OTHER

- Seizures in children who are teething.
- Sweat profuse and offensive.
- Injuries to the nerves; benumbed, painful, cramped; to limbs weary from long walking and travel; contusions.
- Marijuana use and abuse.
- Opium use and abuse; restores the paralyzed nervous tissues.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The herbaceous part of the plant is picked (preferably at full moon, before going to seed). Infusion of the dried herb: pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1–2 teaspoons and infuse in a closed vessel for 10–15 minutes; 3x/day. Tincture (1:1): 1/2–2 ml, 3x/day (BHP); 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day (Matthew Wood).

CAUTION:

Potential of causing allergies in some people.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (10, 14, 15, 18–21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 37, 39, 41), Dorothy Hall (1–13, 40), William LeSassier (16, 24, 29), W. T. Fernie (14, 24), Matthew Wood (10, 21, 22, 25, 26, 33), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (17, 35, 36), Flower Essence Society (32), Eliot Cowan (34). Traditional indications are mostly from William Salmon.

Asparagus officinalis. Asparagus.

Asparagus is a member of the lily family native to Europe, but widely naturalized in North America. It grows near the seacoasts, showing its affinity for salt, and the taste confirms the presence of sodium, which enhances its diuretic effect. It contains flavonoids, saponins (source of the slight bitterness), and volatile oils.

Asparagus is what the late William LeSassier used to call a "nutritive diuretic"; it works by strengthening the kidneys rather than forcing them to work. This is always the preferred method, if we are attempting to heal the kidneys.

"The asparagus is a wild plant in many parts of England about the seacoasts, and its root, in this wild state, is better than that of the cultivated plants, but its shoots have not that fine fleshy fullness" used in cooking. "The root is a powerful diuretic, and is good in all obstructions of the viscera. It has been known singly to perform cures in jaundices and dropsies. It is best given in decoction" (John Hill, 1740, 67).

Asparagus migrated to the New World, where it is grown and naturalized. "*Asparagus officinalis* is a gentle but certain diuretic," writes J. W. Fyfe (1909, 398). "This remedy possesses diuretic properties of a considerable value, and has been employed with advantage in various forms of dropsy. It has also given marked relief in some cases of enlargement of the heart."

TASTE:

salty

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Respiratory congestion and wheeziness accompanied by light colored, copious urine.

- Enlargement of the heart, congestive heart failure, edema.
- Jaundice.
- Dropsical conditions.
- Uric acid diathesis; gout, arthritis, kidney stones.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Decoction of the root (Hill, Moore). Tincture: usual dose: 20–30 drops (Fyfe).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Hill (3, 4), Michael Moore (1, 5), John William Fyfe (2, 4).

Avena sativa. Milky Oatseed, Oatstraw.

Oats are a food crop native to the Old World but widely grown. The seed in the milky stage (just before maturity) produces a beautiful, moistening, sweet nutritional fluid that superficially resembles almond milk. It contains starches, fixed oils, proteins, vitamin E (like wheat germ), flavones, a great deal of silicon with some manganese, iron, and zinc. Oats, like all grasses, are high in silicon. This strengthens the connective tissue, skin, mucosa, and nerves. Oat straw or grass, the stem, is sometimes used. It contains less of the nutrients, but has terpenoid saponins.

Milky oatseed is a very important tonic for the nervous system depleted by stress, prolonged illness, sexual excesses, drug use, or protracted illness. It was first introduced for these purposes in the early twentieth century. “Exhaustion is the keynote,” writes Christopher Menzies-Trull (2003).

Oatstraw has a somewhat different history and usage. Father Sebastian Kneipp introduced “hayseed tea,” for which oatstraw is now used, as a bath and tea. It is usually used for arthritis and rheumatism (fibromyalgia).

TASTE:

(milky seed) sweet • moist

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- *Nervous prostration, debility, weakness, paralysis (neurasthenia)*.
- *Nervous system exhausted, all played out, drained; from stress, excessive duties, drug use, prolonged illness, sexual excess*.
- Inability to keep the mind fixed on any one subject; lack of focus, concentration, and memory; vagary of thought and manner.
- Nervous prostration following mental strain.
- Insomnia associated with nervous exhaustion, despondency, mental irritability.
- Occipital headache extending down the spine and into the lower extremities, associated with neurasthenia; with burning sensation on top of the head.
- Paralysis of the throat in diphtheria.
- Nervous palpitations, tachycardia.
- Nervous, stressed digestion with emaciation, weakness, diarrhea.
- Bedwetting, nocturnal emissions; with weakness.
- Emissions of phosphates and other white substances in the urine, with exhaustion.

- Impotence in men under middle age; from nerve exhaustion, sexual excesses, nocturnal emissions.
- Swollen prostate with neurasthenia.
- Amenorrhea with nervous debility; mental depression, pain in the pelvis.
- Nervous headache at menstruation.
- PMS with headache, exhaustion, panic, or nausea.
- Holds shoulders tight and raised; or shrugged.
- Extremities weak; numbness, lack of strength; nervous tremors, spasm, epilepsy.
- Paralysis and wasting diseases of the elderly.
- Weakness and convalescence from protracted disease, fever, typhoid, drug addiction, tobacco.
- Weak, broken hair, nails, skin (cf. *Equisetum*, homeopathic *Silicea*).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The seed is collected in the milky stage, before maturity, and dried or tinctured fresh. Tincture: 10–15 drops in hot water. “In hot water its action is quicker. It is always best to give it well diluted” (Frederick Petersen, 1905, 53).

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Oats are too damp and sweet for some constitutions. Eating too much can cause diarrhea and a weak GI tract. They may be fattening to the *kapha* (heavy) constitution.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, H. E. Russell, quoted by John William Fyfe (3), Rolla Thomas (2, 5), Yadubir Sinha (8), Julia Graves (9, 17), Christopher Menzies-Trull (8, 16).

Ballota nigra. Black Hoarhound.

Black hoarhound is a mint native to Europe, but naturalized or easily grown elsewhere, including in my garden. It is similar to white hoarhound in appearance, but has a dark green leaf instead of a light one; both are furred or "hoary." Ballota is intensely bitter and rankly aromatic, containing volatile oils, flavonoids, and bitter diterpenes.

Black hoarhound "has more virtue than most imagine," wrote Sir John Hill (1740, 208). "It is to be given in form of tea, it promotes the menses, and is superior to most things as a remedy in hysteric cases, faintings, convulsions, and low-spiritedness, and all the train of those disorders." This description and the following indicate that ballota has a powerful influence through the nervous system, as well as through the secretory glands, which any bitter would typically stimulate.

Richard Hool (1922, 34), a Lancashire herbalist and member of the National Association of Medical Herbalists (precursor to NIMH), is the only author I could find who penned a long account of this plant.

"In black horehound we have one of the most efficacious remedies that we can use for the cure of biliousness, bilious colic, and sour belchings. In the above complaints it is as near a specific as any remedy well can be. The relief it affords is both prompt and certain, for if only a leaf or a piece of the stem be chewed, and the juice swallowed, it will be found to act as if a current of electricity had passed into the stomach, allaying all the symptoms momentarily. In coughs, bronchitis, and asthma it is exceedingly useful. In chronic coughs, accompanied by spitting of blood, it will be found most excellent, either alone or combined with other reliable remedies, such as lobelia, marshmallow, hyssop, etc. Its action is most reliable, as it resolves the viscidity of the mucus secretions, and acts as an alterative-tonic upon the mucous follicles, deterges and heals the diseased membranes, and corrects the acrimony of the discharges. In all cases of consumption it will be found a most useful remedy, as it

not only corrects the acrimony of the mucus discharges, but soothes the irritation of the nerves caused by the fit of coughing, thereby making it easier for the patient in nervous affections. In the pains of travail during the time of carrying, combined with motherwort, it will be found an excellent remedy; in amenorrhea, and also in menorrhagia, it will act in a most wonderful manner."

Hool gives a remarkable case where some postal workers requested his help for one of their co-workers who was down with the cholera—loss of control of the bowels, shivering, trembling, sweating, and weakness. They said they had noticed Hool selling herbs in the marketplace and heard he had a good reputation. He sent them off with ballota, telling them not to worry. By afternoon one of the men returned to say their co-worker was back at work, joking and laughing as usual.

David Hoffmann (2003) is one of the few contemporary authors who mentions *Ballota*. He rightly states that it "is an excellent remedy for calming nausea and vomiting when the cause lies within the nervous system, rather than in the stomach." He notes its value in motion sickness, nausea and vomiting caused by pregnancy, and as a "normalizer" in menstruation.

TASTE:

bitter, pungent • aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

stagnation, depression (including sudden collapse)

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Asthenic and nervous debility.
- Panic attacks.
- Low-spiritedness.

- Convulsion, fainting.

HEAD

- Migraine.

RESPIRATION

- Irritable coughs, viscid, acrid mucus, bloody expectoration.
- Bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, tuberculosis.

DIGESTION

- Loss of appetite; nervous debility, general weakness, loss of energy.
- Sour belchings, biliousness, bilious colic.
- Intestinal parasites.
- Nausea and vomiting caused by irritation of the nervous system rather than the stomach.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

- Tachycardia, hypertension.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Gravel, dropsy.

FEMALE

- Menstruation: amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia, metrorrhagia.
- Parturition: eases pain of labor (combine with *Leonurus*).

SKIN

- Gout (anodyne, poultice).
- Angry boils (poultice).

OTHER

- Motion sickness.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are used, fresh or dried (Hill). “It may be used in infusion, decoction, fluid extract, solid extract; in powder, pills, or tincture; or it may be chewed in the mouth either in the fresh or dried state, and the juice swallowed” (Hool).

CAUTIONS:

Members of the mint family are generally considered to be safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Hill (3, 4, 14), Richard Hool (1, 6–10, 12, 14, 15), Christopher Menzies-Trull (1, 2, 5, 10, 13, 18), David Hoffmann (11), Matthew Wood (11-confirmed), W. T. Fernie (16, 17).

Barosma betulina, Agathosma betulina. Buchu.

Buchu (pronounced boo-koo) is a member of the citrus family native to a tiny area of the South African cape. It was used by the indigenous Bushmen and is now cultivated for its medicinal properties. The wild population is protected. Barosma contains volatile oils, flavonoids (including rutin), mucilage, and resin.

Buchu is warm and stimulating. It has been used extensively in bladder infections since the nineteenth century. It is held to be tonic, as well as stimulating. It is considered to be more specific where there is excess uric acid in the urine. It acts on the kidneys to resolve solids in the urine and on the mucosa of the bladder to reduce mucus discharge. Often these discharges are associated with sexually communicable bacteria, and Australian herbalist Dorothy Hall (1988, 104) associates buchu with both sexually and genetically transmitted venereal taints. The latter manifests as

urogenital sensitivity and joint pains and aches, worse during puberty and times of emotional stress.

John William Fyfe (1909, 408) summarizes the tradition: “Buchu is a valuable remedy in subacute and chronic diseases of the genitourinary tract, but it is not adapted to cases in which there is active inflammation. It has a specific soothing and stimulating influence upon the mucous membranes of the urinary organs, and is especially indicated in any case of lowered systemic tone in which there is an acid urine heavily loaded with mucus or muco-pus.” This would concur with a depressed tissue state. “In cases in which there is a constant desire to micturate, and the act gives little or no relief, its action is markedly corrective, and in retention or incontinence of urine, due to an impaired condition of the parts involved, buchu is a very efficient remedy. It also constitutes an excellent medicament in gastric debility, especially when complicated by wrongs of the urinary organs. In chronic catarrh of the bladder, it is a desirable remedial agent, and in subacute or chronic cystitis it exerts a corrective influence. In pyelitis, hematuria and gravel it may well constitute a part of the treatment. In simple and gonorrheal urethritis it is employed with advantage, and in gleet and some prostatic affections it is regarded as a remedy of considerable value. It is also of some value in chronic rheumatism which is complicated by wrongs of the urinary apparatus.”

“In dropsy it is mainly useful in the asthenic forms, particularly when the kidneys, from want of tone, are tardy in the elimination of the absorbed fluid, or are loaded with uric acid deposits,” observes Grover Coe (1858).

TASTE:

pungent • warm

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- Uric acid diathesis.

DIGESTION

- Atonic dyspepsia (infused brandy).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallstones.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Chronic conditions of the urinary tract.
- Highly acid urine, with constant desire to urinate, without relief.
- Kidneys, urethra, bladder, prostate.
- Constant desire to urinate, with but little relief from the act.
- *Catarrhal conditions of mucous membranes of the genitourinary organs; secretions excessive, tissues sensitive, mucus, and mucopurulent discharges; gonorrhea, cystitis*.
- Gravelly conditions characterized by the deposit of a pinkish-colored sediment in the urine.
- Edema from lack of tone, depression of the kidney function, nephritis.
- Scalding urine.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritic conditions dependent on a uric acid diathesis; after the acute symptoms have subsided.
- Lumbago associated with renal conditions.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The dried leaves of commerce are used by infusion, 1 ounce to 1 pint. When well-indicated, buchu will react promptly and obviously

(Hall).

CAUTIONS:

Generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1), Maude Grieve (2), Frederick Locke (2), Rolla Thomas (6), Louise Tenney (3, 4, 5, 8, 10–12), John William Fyfe (7–9), Grover Coe (10, 12, 13), Dorothy Hall.

Berberis vulgaris. Barberry Root.

Barberry is native to Europe and has been used in herbal medicine since ancient times. It was lauded by the Egyptians and is a remedy of great repute in Ayurveda. The Western herbal, Ayurvedic, and homeopathic

uses and indications coincide perfectly. Barberry root is extremely bitter, containing isoquinoline alkaloids, of which the most significant is berberine (cf. Hydrastis, Berberis aquifolium*). It is used as an intense bitter to influence the liver, gallbladder, and digestion. It also works on the kidneys and bladder.*

Barberry root has properties similar to its cousin Oregon grape. They are bitters that increase secretion from the mucosa and internal organs such as the liver and kidneys. Both thus counteract heat and dryness, but there is more evidence of stagnation, torpor, and dampness in the barberry patient whereas the Oregon grape person is hot, dry, and even sclerotic.

Herbalist Richard Hool (1922, 15) observed, "A piece of the bark placed in the mouth and chewed on the hottest day in summer, however dry or thirsty you may be, will slake your thirst by making the saliva run or flow from the salivary glands of the mouth. Barberry exercises an especial influence over the mucous surfaces, its action in this being so manifest that the indications for its employment [heat and dryness] cannot be mistaken. Upon the liver it acts with equal certainty and efficacy. As a cholagogue and a deobstruent it has few equals; in affections of the spleen, mesentery, and abdominal viscera generally, it is an efficient and reliable remedy. In the treatment of chronic derangements of the liver and portal circulation, the bark, when boiled and then made into a syrup, and used freely as a drink, will be found excellent in cases of diarrhea and dysentery, fluxes, and malignant fevers. For abating the heat, quenching the thirst, raising the strength, and preventing putrefaction, scarcely its equal is to be found in any other remedy, as it promotes secretions, expels and removes morbid matter from the stomach and bowels."

Some of the more specific symptoms are given by Dr. John William Fyfe (1909). "Barberry exercises a direct influence upon the kidneys, bladder and liver, and is used with marked success in abnormal conditions of these organs, especially where there are tearing pains in the renal region, or pains extending down the back

and down the ureters into the bladder. In wrongs of the liver [and gallbladder], especially when there are sharp pains extending from the liver to the abdomen, it is deemed a remedy of merit.

"Barberry also constitutes a very efficient tonic in debilitating and anemic conditions, especially when the tongue is deep red or brownish [coated] in color. It promotes natural secretion, favors the flow of gastric juice, and aids the digestive organs in their work of assimilation. It has also been employed with much success in malarial diseases."

The specific indication that I find most useful is the rapid, hard pulse. This comes from the homeopathic provings: "Pulse slow and weak, or full, hard, and rapid" (Adolph Lippe, 1865, 77). This indicates a forceful heat, driving the body—what traditional Chinese medicine would call "full heat." The weak, slow pulse comes afterward, when the system is exhausted and resistance has been worn down.

The berries are also sometimes used in herbalism. They are sour rather than bitter. Gerard (1633) describes their use in acute hepatitis with "biliary flux" or thin, yellow diarrhea. "The sparingly produced juice of the berries is cooling and astringent," writes Fernie (1914, 43). He gives many recipes for its preparation. "Barberry is one of the most beneficial medicinal plants," comments herbalist Michael Moore (2003, 47).

TASTE:

(berries) sour, astringent • cooling, drying
(root) bitter, astringent, pungent • warming, drying, nourishing

TISSUE STATES:

(root) atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Full heat conditions with inflammation; tongue deep red (Fyfe), coated (Ellingwood, Fernie), yellow, slimy, drying out, or damp and sticky; pulse rapid and hard (Lippe).
- After full heat the fluids are burned out and exhaustion sets in; "debilitated and anemic conditions" (Fyfe); "pale face, with a dingy-grayish tinge, sunken cheeks, and deep-seated eyes, surrounded with bluish and blackish-gray border"(Lippe).
- Chronic inflammation and congestion, with water and phlegm blocking the fire (cf. *Taraxacum*).

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Deeply shattered in mind or body, even multiple-personality, from abuse, long-lasting illness.
- Mind dull, like a chronic hangover.
- Brain disorders.

HEAD

- Migraine; worse from movement.
- Eyes sore, dry, biting, burning, or itching.
- Mouth dry and sticky.
- Throat; "inflammation of tonsils and pharynx, with swelling and fiery redness, and a sensation as if a lump were lodged in the side of the throat" (Lippe).
- Chronic swollen glands in the throat.

DIGESTION

- Lack of appetite, bad breath, mouth ulcers, gum disease.
- Relaxed, atonic, catarrhal conditions of the gastrointestinal mucosa.
- Stomach, full, congested, lack of secretion; heartburn.
- Gastric and duodenal ulcers.
- Congestion of abdomen and pelvis.
- Constipation, hard stools.
- Chronic diarrhea and dysentery; cholera; bilious diarrhea.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- "Jaundice from congestive liver, with furred tongue, lowness of spirits, and yellow complexion" (Fernie).
- Torpid liver; gallstones; bilious colic; jaundice; sharp pains under the right ribs; pains extending from the liver to the abdomen (from liver to back, *Chelidonium*).

SPLEEN AND PANCREAS

- Thirsty diabetes.
- Swollen spleen from malaria.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Pain in the kidneys, shooting down the thighs, around the torso; kidney stones.
- Acute kidney stone colic (5 drops on a sugar cube every 5 minutes).

FEMALE

- Pregnancy; vomiting.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscular wasting and debility.

SKIN

- *Skin rashes, eczema, psoriasis (cf*. Berberis aquifolium*); a superlative remedy when the skin shows small, dry patches, red, brown, or white; ringworm, itching*.
- Acne, pimples, boils.
- Pimples and roughness of the skin, promotes a clear complexion, soft, smooth, and naturally moist, "in sensitive young ladies, when the cause is not a reflex one from ovaries or uterine irritation, or menstrual irregularity."

FEVER

- Chronic, low-grade bacterial infections; intestinal, hepatic, vaginal; giardia, ringworm, etc., hot and dry, or hot and damp.
- Chronic malarial conditions, intermittent fevers, with disorder of the stomach, liver, intestines, and lymphatics.
- *Rapid, hard pulse* when fever is present.
- Scarlet fever.
- Inflammation in acute disease (berries and leaves).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The extremely bitter root tincture can be used in very small doses, 1–5 drops. However, it is commonly used in doses up to 20 or 30 drops. Small doses are tonic, large ones are purgative (Tirtha).

CAUTIONS:

Too bitter to easily overdose.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, homeopathic provings, Andrew Lange (4), Adolph Lippe (1, 2, 16, 17, 32), John William Fyfe (1, 2, 13, 14, 18, 20), Finley Ellingwood (1, 11, 12, 17, 25–28, 30), William Boericke, Swami Sada Shiva Tirtha (6, 15, 16, 24, 33), Samuel Henry (34), W. T. Fernie (1, 18, 19, 21, 23), Matthew Wood (30, 32), Michael Moore (34).

Beta vulgaris. Beet.

Beet is a member of the Chenopodiaceae family growing wild on the seacoasts of southern Europe, north Africa, the Middle East, and India, but now widely grown as a food crop. It is the source of the sugar beet. Its use as a common article of food should not dull our appreciation for its powerful effects.

Beet contains up to one-tenth part glucose, which enters the bloodstream almost immediately. Hence, it is likely to cause blood sugar reactions. This is probably why some people, including myself, find it overstimulating, whereas it puts others to sleep. The "food doctors," who pioneered the use of beet juice as a remedy, recommended its introduction in small doses (up to an ounce of the juice per day at first). In addition to glucose it contains mucilage and gums. It is sweet and slightly bitter, nutritive, cleansing, and alterative.

Beet root is used to build the blood and cleanse the liver. It acts on the liver, heart, and circulation. The leaves are more bitter and are used as a liver cleanser.

Betonica officinalis, Stachys officinalis. Wood Betony.

This mint is today called Stachys officinalis, *which seems to me rather high-handed, since it has been known as* Betonica *for a few thousand years. It contains betaine, choline, tannins, and alkaloids*.

Wood betony is a very ancient and important nervine, at one time considered a cure-all and, with *Hypericum*, the most important remedy in the Middle Ages for psychiatric problems (demon possession and results of witchcraft, as it was then expressed). These applications are not unmerited, for it has a strong influence on the stomach and enteric brain, and on the brain, head, and nervous system generally, improving gut-level instincts, thinking, and groundedness. It is a most important remedy for the elderly, and for persons who are thin, intellectual, lacking in common sense. It improves the autonomic innervations of the digestive tract, imparting strength and regularity. It is indicated in weak digestion, pallor, poor assimilation, and weak gallbladder reflexes. Thins the blood, strengthens nerve force, opens the circulation, reduces nervousness and hypertension. Severe pain causing hysteria, frenzy, or lack of groundedness. “The habitual use of it will cure the most inveterate head-achs” (John Hill, 1740, 83).

Compare wood betony with its minty cousins *Melissa, Leonurus, Lycopus, Scutellaria*, and *Monarda*, all of which are relaxing and blood pressure reducing.

TASTE:

sweet (vanilla-like) • neutral • mildly diffusive, aromatic

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION AND COMPLEXION

- *Tall, thin persons, disassociated from their body, instincts, and common sense; frail, elderly people, disconnected from their surroundings; thin, spaced out, with stomach problems*.
- Complexion pale, wan, leaden.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Traditional for demon possession; extremely helpful for persons who have had unwanted alien abduction experiences.
- Frenzy, hysteria, anxiety; from the pain or situation; delirium; insanity; insomnia.

HEAD

- *Headache* with pain causing hysteria; neuralgia.
- *Head injury, concussion, stroke;* increases circulation and nervous activity; restorative after concussion.

RESPIRATION

- Colds, bronchitis, coughs.

DIGESTION

- *Stomach and abdominal problems; bloating, heartburn, gas, worms, colic, mild pains, diarrhea or constipation from weakness*.
- Fear of vomiting.
- Improves digestion of meat.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Pains in abdomen, hepatic region, transverse colon, gallbladder, right inguinal region, and spermatic cords.
- *Weak gallbladder reflexes and solar plexus; worse from eating; lack of bile, anemia, asthenia, constipation, jaundice*.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Weak bladder sphincters, bedwetting.
- Weak expulsion of urine, retention.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Thin, weak extremities; poor circulation to extremities.
- Arthritis.
- Parkinson’s disease.

FEVER

- Fever; night sweats; convulsions from loss of fluids and strength during fever.

SKIN

- Sores, ulcers, varicose veins.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are collected “when just going to flower” (Hill, 1740, 83); infusion, tincture, etc., in small to moderate doses.

CAUTIONS:

Generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

The original work was done by Antonius Musa, physician to the emperor Augustus. Traditional, Matthew Wood (1, 2-confirmed, 3, 4, 6, 12), Plinius (2, 7, 9), Julia Graves (6, 9), Yadubir Sinha (11).

Betula alba, B. lenta. Birch.

The leaves, bark, and sap of various kinds of birch are an important remedy, usually used as a diuretic, in European folk and professional medicine. White birch (B. alba) *is the officinal species. In the United States sweet birch* (B. lenta) *is usually considered officinal. The tree contains oil of wintergreen and salicylates, making it topically anodyne and soothing in joint disease and skin lesions. The resemblance to the skin may have led to the use of birch bark in healing skin*.

The medicinal uses of birch are “better known in Scandinavia than in more southerly countries,” notes Donald Law (1973, 32). “In most of the northern lands it is held efficacious against evil spirits and witchcraft.” And Alma Hutchins (1992, 26) says birch “is inseparable from the Russian people, as it is their most poetic tree.” It is also honored in central Europe. Despite the commonness of birch, it is very little used in North America.

In Germany it is traditional to use the tea of the leaves or the spring sap of the birch *(Betula alba)* to remove proteinaceous and mineral waste from the blood, muscles, and joints. The tea of the leaves is a nonirritating diuretic that removes these waste products without inflaming the kidneys. It can even be safely used when there is nephrosis and chronic nephritis—birch contains saponins that are diuretic and have a cortisone-like effect. It is used to dissolve earthen deposits like kidney stones and gouty and arthritic deposits. It opens the sweat glands, which assists the kidneys to remove waste, and the bark is used as an emollient externally and internally to remove hard, indurated, mineralized skin. As a diaphoretic birch leaf can be useful in intermittent fever.

Birch has a long history of use in Europe as a hair tonic. I am compelled to testify on this matter due to a single case history. While in Australia a woman brought her fourteen-year-old daughter to see me about something or other. I commented that she had some of the healthiest, thickest hair I had ever seen. The mother explained that her daughter’s hair was originally spindly and thin. For several years they rinsed it in nettles and birch. The girl also had an excellent skin and tan—which many Anglo-Celtic Australians do not have, including her mother.

Birch bark is used in anthroposophical medicine for hard, indurated, mineralized skin. Rudolf Steiner pointed to the mineralization of birch bark, which is dry and scaly, as an indication for its use in hardening or sclerosis. The bark is high in potassium, which helps the body retain water. In order to stimulate the periphery, the skin, anthroposophical doctors give birch by subcutaneous injection (Bott, 1978, 76, 195). However, a warm or hot tea is a highly effective method for stimulating the surface and

opening the pores. Another anthroposophical author adds that birch is suited to the treatment of problems of aging associated with drying, hardening, and sclerosis (Wolff, 1991, 19).

It could more simply be said that birch bark looks like the skin. This is particularly true in North America, the inner bark resembling very closely the dark skin of Native Americans. In American Indian medicine the oily inner bark of the birch is decocted for external use on the skin.

Unfortunately, birch is not used much in North American herbalism. The sap of the sweet or black birch *(Betula lenta)* is tapped, like the maple tree, to produce a sweet beverage or syrup. The leaves and twigs are gathered in midsummer to make a tea. It is considered diaphoretic, diuretic, and (due to the oil of wintergreen) beneficial in rheumatic complaints (fibromyalgia). The sugars make it nutrient, probably more than any other birch. Ben Charles Harris (1972, 136) reports that "in 1861 after the Battle of Carricks Ford, the edible bark of Black Birch probably saved the lives of hundreds of Garnett's Confederate soldiers during their retreat to Monterey, Virginia. For a number of years after that, the route the soldiers took could be traced by the peeled Birch Trees."

TASTE:

sweet, bitter, astringent

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Insomnia.

HEAD

- Hair; dry, thin; poor scalp health, dry dandruff; also in oily hair (external).

RESPIRATION

- Dry, irritable coughs in winter, from indoor heating, wood smoke (tea of the fresh leaves).
- Colds (buds).

DIGESTION

- Lack of appetite.
- Bleeding gums, canker sores, stomach ulcers.
- Poisoning, gas, bloating, indigestion (birch charcoal).
- Diarrhea, dysentery, cholera.
- Worms.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallbladder stagnation (boiled buds used for the bitter resin; or fresh buds).

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Cardiac edema.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Kidney stones.
- Bladder infections; chronic, purulent, and catarrhal.
- Edema.

FEMALE

- Menses; prolonged, in weak, “winter tired” women (native use; Michael Moore).
- Postpartum; slow recovery (native use; Michael Moore).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Tight muscles, joints, strains (oil massage).

- Stiff knees from meditation posture.
- Arthritis, rheumatism, gout.
- Stiff muscles, aching joints and tendons, from overuse.

SKIN

- Eczema, psoriasis, bruises, cuts, burns, wounds (bark, external, internal).
- Acne, boils, abscesses (bark, external).
- Hard, indurated, mineralized skin; dry dermatitis; corns, calluses (bark, external).

FEVER

- Intermittent fever.

OTHER

- Arteriosclerosis.
- Hardening, drying, and sclerosis of old age (internal).
- Anemia.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The tender leaves are picked in the spring, before the bitterness is highly developed, juiced and used as a blood cleanser in Germany or infused in a tea. In Russia the fresh buds are preserved in vodka for subsequent use. The diuretic effect is enhanced by adding a fraction of sodium bicarbonate or drinking cold. The diaphoretic effect is enhanced by drinking hot. The leaves produce diuresis best in small, frequent doses (Michael Moore). The oil of the leaves is used as a liniment. The oily inner bark is used in North American Indian medicine for the skin (Tis Mal Crow).

CAUTIONS:

Edible; regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Ludwig Kroeber (8, 9, 10, 12–14, 17–22, 24), Alma Hutchins (4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 19, 27), Mannfried Pahlow (2, 21), Julia Graves (19), Jack Ritchason (1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 21, 25), Victor Bott (19, 23, 24), Otto Wolff (26), Ben Charles Harris, Michael Moore (3, 15, 16), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (14).

Bidens tripartita, B. cernua. Bur Marigold.

Bur marigold is a member of the composite or Asteraceae family. It is seldom mentioned in herbal literature. However, it was the favorite herb of Richard Hool (1847–1920), a Lancashire herbalist and early member of the National Association (now Institute) of Medical Herbalists, in Great Britain. He learned about it from his mother, a wise "herb woman."

“Bur marigold, in the treatment of dropsy and gravel affections, depends more upon its diaphoretic and astringent properties, than on its direct diuretic influences. It resolves mucous deposits, and deterges and heals abraded mucous surfaces in catarrh of the bladder, engorgement of the uterus, and in all atonic conditions of the urinary apparatus. It is peculiarly useful in dropsy, strangury, hematuria, gout, etc., being a most valuable and auxiliary agent. Its utility in the last-mentioned diseases is owing to the power of resolving viscidity of the secretions and of promoting renal depuration. It seems to exercise a peculiar soothing and toning influence upon inflamed and abraded mucous surfaces. It also promotes assimilation and restrains diarrheal tendency, but it is in all cases of haemorrhage and where bleeding is concerned that its greatest qualities are found. In bleeding from the lungs, stomach, or bowels its equal cannot be found, for as a styptic it puts all other remedies in the shade, no matter whether they be vegetable or mineral.

“In all diseases of the respiratory organs, where bleeding is concerned, bur marigold is of the highest value and utility, as it first resolves the viscidity of the pulmonary secretions, the plasticity of the venous blood, and promotes cutaneous depuration, healing the part affected without causing any irritation of the patient” (Hool, 1922).

It is interesting to note that burr marigold or “beggar’s ticks,” as it is more commonly called in America, only flourishes in wet years, near ponds and swamps that are flooded. Sometimes it can be grown near a rain spout. This indicates that it is a remedy for tissue that has been flooded. As a pungent aromatic it thins and warms the fluids, as a bitter it moves stagnant fluids and phlegm, and as an astringent it tones relaxed and swollen tissue.

TASTE:

pungent, bitter • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

depression, torpor, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervousness, insomnia, in children.
- “Tension of fear.”
- General debility.

HEAD

- Headache.

RESPIRATION

- Allergic rhinitis congestion; not for viral rhinitis.
- Laryngitis.
- Bronchial affection with viscid mucus and difficult coughing; croup, severe coughs, asthma.
- Tuberculosis; bleeding from the lungs.

DIGESTION

- Diarrhea, dysentery.
- Bleeding hemorrhoids.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM AND BLOOD

- Palpitations of the heart.
- Ruptured blood vessels, bleedings of all kinds, life threatening, internal and external.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Kidney disease, edema, gravel; opens the skin to relieve the kidneys.
- Cystitis, catarrh in the bladder.

FEMALE

- Severe uterine hemorrhage.
- Lack of or painful periods.

MALE

- Benign prostatic hypertrophy.

SKIN

- Eczema.

FEVER

- Fever; thins mucus, opens the skin.

OTHER

- Liver and blood purifier.
- Gout.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The whole plant (herb) is used (Brown, Hool). “Take 2 oz. of bur marigold, cut into small pieces, and place with 1 oz. of crushed lump ginger into 3 pints of cold water, and simmer it down to one quart. Strain, and it is ready for use. The dose is half to one tea cupful, taken either warm or cold as often as required; the severer the case the more frequently it should be given” (Hool). Herb and root (Hutchins). Herb before or during flowering, tinctured fresh (7Song).

CAUTIONS:

Potential allergies in sensitive people.

LITERATURE:

O. Phelps Brown, Richard Hool (3, 7–12, 14, 15, 19, 21), Alma Hutchins (1, 2, 4, 7, 14, 18, 20), Maude Grieve, Robert Dale Rogers (6, 7, 13, 15, 17, 19), 7Song (5).

Borago officinalis. Borage.

Borage is a member of the comfrey family native to the eastern hemisphere but easily grown in gardens elsewhere. It has been used since the most ancient times and has always been classified as a cooling herb. In the days before iced drinks it was known as "cooltankard." Borage is still liberally used in British herbalism, but not much in North America. From British herbalists I have obtained my understanding of the remedy and I use it, as they do, as an important remedy for severe nervous exhaustion.

Borage is a deep-acting nervine suited to cases where there is thorough exhaustion and low spirits. Often the person is just run to death by responsibilities or, alternately, runs themselves down with self-criticism and impossible standards. Rosari Kingston, herbalist (MNIMH), of County Cork, Ireland, says borage is indicated in

“menopausal women who are overworked and totally exhausted. Teachers are a good example. Start on vervain, then go to borage to tone the entire system from the hypothalamus on down. Or follow with lycopus. It is assisted by avena.” Another experienced herbalist, Anita Ralph, MNIMH, of Kent, confirms the use of borage in the nervous exhaustion sometimes found in menopause. Borage contains silicon, which has a powerful rebuilding effect on the nervous system (cf. *Avena, Equisetum*, homeopathic *Silicea*).

“Borage for courage” is an expression oft quoted in herbal lore. Lise Wolff explains: “It is for people who are so run-down that they lack the fortitude or courage to face a responsibility or stress.” To which I add: “confirmed.”

In addition to acting on the nerves borage has an action on the endocrine system. Mrs. Leyel cited it as a remedy for adrenal exhaustion. It probably works higher up the endocrine cascade. Bernard Jensen recommended it for thyroid issues. It has been traditionally used to increase lactation, so it probably acts on the top of the endocrine chain, on the hypothalamus and pituitary.

Maude Grieve (1931, 120) notes: “By virtue of its saline constituents, it promotes the activity of the kidneys.” Borage was traditionally used to treat “melancholic” conditions, especially those affecting the heart. The properties of borage are still somewhat unknown to modern herbalism, so I will quote from a traditional source.

William Salmon (1710, 112) writes that borage “effectually purifies the blood, and is of excellent use in all putrid, malign, spotted and pestilential fevers, to defend the heart from their poison and malignity, and to expell the same, as also the poison of other creatures.” That would make it cooling in the third degree—that is, capable of sedating heat from systemic infection, microbes, and poisons. It has been used for contagious fevers, scarlet fever, and chicken pox. “Mixt with juice of fumitory, it cools and cleanses the blood, and is profitable against the yellow jaundice.”

By strengthening the heart borage is good “against fainting and swooning fits, and other passions of the heart” and “revives the spirits.” The infusion of the herb in wine “admirably recreates the

spirits, and gratifies or pleases the stomach, is good against the cardiack passion, and melancholly, and is prevalent against the falling-sickness." He also mentions heart palpitations.

Borage contains some mucilage. The syrup is used for coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, colds, and asthma. The distilled essence "strengthens nature," a phrase meaning that it improves resistance to chills and fevers by toning the sweat pores or the basic immunity.

Borage is used externally on wounds, running sores, and ulcers "in bodies of an ill habit"; also on inflammation of the eyes. Rycharde Banckes (1525) used it to cure abscesses due to collection of melancholic humors (conditions tending toward uncleanness and putrefaction).

TASTE:

slightly sweet and salty • moist, cooling

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Downcast, heavy-hearted, weighed down, depressed (borage oil, borage herb).
- Nervousness, insomnia, fainting, dizziness, melancholy.
- Overwork, nervousness, exhaustion; especially in menopausal women.

HEAD

- *Sore and inflamed eyes* (eyewash).

RESPIRATION

- Colds, *bronchitis; chronic catarrh*, congestion, pleurisy, fever.

DIGESTION

- Indigestion, jaundice.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

- Heart palpitations (probably from hyperthyroidism, not heart disease).
- Varicose veins (lotion or compress, 20% *Borago*).

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

- Hyperthyroidism.

FEMALE

- Pregnancy: softens the cervix (borage oil, black currant oil, primrose oil).
- Postpartum: nervous exhaustion (borage with passionflower tea).
- *Diminished lactation;* increases flow of milk.
- Menopause in exhausted women.
- Menopausal hot flashes.

SKIN

- Corns.
- Skin rashes, ringworm.

FEVER

- Fever with mucus.
- Scarlet fever, chicken pox.
- Peritonitis (cf. *Eupatorium maculatum*).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The annual herb is picked at the end of the season during flowering. Culpeper preferred to use the fresh herb preserved in syrup, which increases the cooling and moistening properties (Graeme Tobyn). John Hill (1740, 90) required that the herb be infused or tinctured cold rather than warm. “Throwing it into cold wine is better than all the medicinal preparations.” Due to the proven toxicity, dosage should be small. I find 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day a fine dose, or the flower essence.

CAUTIONS:

The hairs on the fresh leaves can irritate the skin. Borage contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that have demonstrated hepatotoxicity. Dosage should be small.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (18), Flower Essence Society (1), Julia Graves (1), Anita Ralph (1, 14), Rosari Kingston (1, 2, 3, 13), Otto Wolff (8), Bernard Jensen (9), Jack Ritchason (15), Louise Tenney (4, 5, 6, 12, 15), Maude Grieve (16), Hakim Chishti (5, 12, 19).

Brassica nigra, B. alba. Black or White Mustard Seed.

Mustard seed is fiery and stimulating—it is classified as hot and dry in the fourth degree in Greek/Arabic medicine. That is the category for medicines that raise a blister. After the demise of classical medicine these agents were classified as stimulants. In folk medicine around the world mustard seed is used as a topical stimulant on arthritic joints and rheumatic, stiff muscles. A mustard plaster or “sinapism” is placed on the chest to break up heavy mucus and pneumonia (cf. Allium cepa, Zingiber*).*

“The seeds are more used in sauce, than in medicine,” commented Dr. John Quincy in the *London Pharmacopoeia* (1736, 75). However, “they are mighty efficacious in stimulating the fibers, and loosening and discussing viscidity’s; and therefore excellent in all paralytic cases, and the decays and defluxions attending old age. They are also very diuretic, and serviceable in abscesses and dropsies.”

The most comprehensive account of mustard as an internal remedy comes from Dr. A. C. Gunn (1847, 705), who moved from London to frontier Tennessee. “The white mustard seed is one of the most valuable medicines and certain remedies that can be presented in the disordered functions of the stomach, liver and bowels. In twenty years’ practice I may with great certainty say, that I have performed some of the most astonishing cures with this apparently simple remedy; particularly in cases of intemperate persons, and apparently worn-out constitutions, or general debility of the system.”

TASTE:

pungent

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Old, worn-out constitutions, where the digestive tract has been much abused by the use of alcohol and stimulants, or is simply in old-age decline.
- Delicate, sensitive, elderly people who easily catch cold and come down with respiratory infections that tend to viscosity and chronicity.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- All pervasive depression, despondency, and despair; comes out of nowhere, for no reason; overcast, dark and gloomy (flower essence).

RESPIRATION

- Severe colds, numbness of the limbs, loss of appetite, failure of sleep, weakness of nerves, depression of spirits, with general debility of the whole system.
- Sinusitis (if the abdomen and lower extremities are cold, a mustard foot bath for 10 minutes).
- Asthma and shortness of breath, wheezing cough.
- *Pneumonia (sinapism; mustard pack on chest)*.

DIGESTION

- Indigestion, or sense of weight after eating; heartburn, sickness or pain at the pit of the stomach.
- Used to prevent indigestion from eating fats and difficult to digest meat.
- Cramp, pain in the sides and lower part of the body.
- Relaxed bowels, flatulence, cramp, and habitual costiveness.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Torpor and other morbid affections of the liver.

SKIN

- Deficient perspiration, gravel, unhealthy state of the urine, disorders of the skin and kidneys.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis (sinapism; mustard pack on joint).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Internal: a moderately hot mustard should be used. The adult dose is a half to whole teaspoonful of the seed, 3x/day (before lunch, after dinner, and before bed). Persist for two to six months in chronic cases to receive the full benefit; improvement is not generally felt the first week. The seeds should be swallowed whole. They act gently through the digestive tract, the seeds passing whole with the loss of a little mucilage along the way. External: mustard packs can be purchased already made. If making them oneself, do not touch the mustard directly to the skin or it will burn.

CAUTIONS:

Can burn the skin.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (7), A. C. Gunn (1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10–14), John Quincy (1, 2), Edward Bach (3), Otto Wolff (5).

Brassica oleracea. Cabbage.

Cabbage is an ancient horticultural development from the wild kale of European seacoasts, sometimes naturalized elsewhere. Due to its maritime environment, it is rich in sodium, chlorine, and iodine. It also contains sulphur and phosphorus, which contribute to the thiols that make it fiery. "When cabbage is combined with the meal, we have a considerably greater amount of minerals, but cabbage is extremely hard to digest and, due to the large amount of phosphorus and sulphur, is acid in its reactions" (Clymer, 1933, I:37). It is said that cabbage was the chief medicine of the Romans, before the appearance of Greek medicine.

Cabbage contains a high amount of sulphur and is warming and stimulating. It has long been used as a stimulant for depressed

circulation, skin, and mucosa. It has an ancient reputation in gangrene and ulceration. Cabbage juice is still widely used by nutritional practitioners but is less commonly mentioned in the literature of professional herbal medicine. It is a popular remedy for ulceration of the stomach, specific to conditions where the problem is due to tissue depression. In people who are suffering from overactive heat, burning, and acidity, it will cause irritation, diarrhea, and even bloody stool. It is for the inflammation that arises from depression, where the tissues are understimulated. The remedy is prepared from a ripe cabbage head, juiced or chopped and pressed through a sieve.

Cabbage leaves are sometimes used as an external compress. It was highly recommended as a specific on the lungs to prevent or cure pleurisy. A leaf in the bra is a modern folk remedy (usually very successful) to help the milk come in and prevent or cure mastitis. For use in a poultice, “the stem should be cut out, and the rough inequalities bruised with a rolling pin” writes Mrs. Child (1837, 140).

Cabbage in large doses depresses the thyroid; hence it has been used in hyperthyroidism, but is contraindicated in low thyroid. It is paradoxical that it should be a stimulant and yet reduce hyperthyroidism.

TASTE:

pungent • warm • stimulating

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervous agitation, anxiety, examination fear, depression, insomnia, nightmares.
- Hyperthyroidism; antagonist to the thyroid.

HEAD

- Migraine (external).

RESPIRATION

- Tonsillitis, laryngitis (gargle).
- Dry cough, asthma, pain in the side and pleurisy (external).

DIGESTION

- Congested liver (external and internal).
- Stomach ulcers, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, intestinal worms, and constipation.
- Gastrointestinal debility, especially colon.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Cystitis, burning, discharges, difficult urination, and inflamed prostate.

FEMALE

- Painful periods (external).
- Mastitis (external).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, rheumatism, muscle pain, sciatica, gout (external).

SKIN

- Gangrenous wounds, burns, carbuncles (external).

OTHER

- Chronic fatigue.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Almost any member of the kale family can be used, but the red cabbage is preferred. It can be prepared as a juice, syrup, decoction, compress, or poultice. The properties change with the preparation. The raw plant is most pungent and heating. The cooked leaves are mildly heating. The broth is used as an intestinal cleanse in traditional German folk medicine. Arnold Ehret, of “mucusless” fame, called it “the intestinal broom.” Lacto-fermentation produces sauerkraut, which is sour and salty; used to lose weight and restore intestinal flora. Even the leaf, laid on the part, as a stimulant, can be used.

CAUTIONS:

Cabbage can burn the skin and mucosa. Can depress thyroid function.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dioscorides (13), William Buchan (5), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli, Maurice Mességué (1, 3, 4, 10, 12, 14).

Calendula officinalis.

Calendula is a member of the composite family native to Europe but widely grown for its beautiful golden orange flowers and occasionally naturalized elsewhere. In a mild climate calendula blooms throughout "the calends of the year" (Gerard, 1633), also entitling it to the title "herbal sunshine." It is suited for "places where the sun doesn't shine" (acupuncturist Chris Hafner), such as the glands under the neck, axilla, breasts, groin, and so forth. Calendula contains flavonoids (isoquercitrin, rutin), polysaccharides (immune stimulants), bitters (triterpene glycosides), resins, volatile oils, and minerals (including iodine).

Calendula was classified as warm in the first degree (diaphoretic) and neutral with regard to damp and dry (it is both drying and moistening in different situations). It was well known as a folk remedy when Samuel Hahnemann adopted it into the homeopathic materia medica as a specific topical dressing for wounds, sores, burns, and infections. It improves internal drainage from purulent wounds, indicating an affinity to the lymphatic system and the veins. The indications for internal use have not been well developed

in homeopathy; they come to us from herbal sources. David Hoffmann recently commented that St. John's wort is the topical dressing of choice in Europe, whereas calendula is more popular in America. Both of these uses reflect homeopathic influence.

Calendula possesses at least seven main properties: (1) it is applied externally to wounds as an antiseptic, bacteriostatic, and hemostatic, (2) used internally it is therapeutic for swollen glands and lingering, unresolved infections, cleansing the lymphatic glands and ducts, (3) it lowers high enzyme counts from damaged liver, (4) it soothes the digestive mucosa, and other mucous membranes, (5) it warms the stomach, drives heat to the periphery, thins fluids, and causes sweating in fever, (6) it promotes the period, and (7) it is a traditional European peasant tonic taken to prevent sickness in winter—what we would call today an "immune tonic." Neurological changes have been reported from its use but its action in this sphere it not well documented, or at least, not well known to this author.

Calendula is most famous as a wound remedy. It can be used to treat a minor scratch or serious laceration. It prevents the appearance of pus and inflammation, encouraging the body to heal the tissues at its own pace. However, if pus has formed, it keeps the inflammation from spreading, lessens the pain, slowly resolves the pus, and moves the debris away through the adjacent lymphatics. It is often used as a gentle application on sunburn, burns, sores, ulcers, insect bites, bruises, and other topical injuries, but it has a specific affinity for swollen, hot, painful, pus-filled tissue, especially where there is no vent. It is particularly effective on cat scratches. Because it is salty, calendula can be considered an emollient. It keeps wounds from hardening and forming scar tissue, yet it can also be used for hard-to-cure wounds—here combine with horsetail (Tietze, 1996, 40).

By observing its actions on the drainage from wounds, we realize that calendula is an effective lymphatic remedy and can be used topically or internally for swollen glands. It helps resolve stagnation in the lymphatics from wounds, gland removal, or sickness. In this capacity it is assisted by its immune stimulating contents. It may help the liver through the extensive immunological tissue found in

that organ, or through the mild bitterness of its leaves, stimulating the liver and gallbladder. It has not been known, however, to increase bile production. Its action on the digestion is mostly through soothing the mucosa, reducing inflammation and perhaps immune overactivity.

In traditional Greek medicine it was classified as "warm in the first degree," meaning that it promotes sweating. Herbalist Matthew Becker commented to the author that calendula is "one of the best diaphoretics for deep fever," and is especially indicated when the bones hurt. In this he compares it to boneset.

Although I am loath to pick a fight with the ancient authors, who knew Greek medicine much better than I do, it is my experience that calendula is warm in the second and third degrees as well as the first. That is to say, it thins fluids to remove them from the body (especially pus), and it warms the stomach to drive heat to the periphery. I personally have a hot stomach and find calendula to be too warming, and very irritating, to my stomach.

Generally, plants hot in the third degree are antiseptics because they so "warm" or stimulate the body that impurities are sent to the surface, thus cleansing the interior of food and lodging for bacteria. This is a different definition from that of modern science, which views antiseptics as substances with the capacity to kill bacteria. In traditional and holistic medicine great value is placed on changing the environment, so that bacteria and parasites *have* to move. Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer (1933, I:163) explained antiseptic qualities of calendula by the fact that the leaves contain high levels of organic iodine. "In septic sore throat, in fact, in all throat inflammations, the combination of calendula, echinacea, and myrrh should be the first combination to be applied." He also used calendula "in the treatment of ulcers and cancers of the stomach," sometimes in conjunction with *Hydrastis*.

Clymer preferred a nonalcoholic tincture or infusion of the dehydrated green herb, which is not the usual preparation. This would contain more of the vegetable bitters. He continues: "Internally it is a mild stimulant, and, as in cancer and tumors of the stomach, a normalizing and healing agent. In hot infusion it

influences the circulation toward the surface and is diaphoretic. Its nature being to heal, it is valuable in formulas in pneumonia and other internal ailments where inflammations exist. It is also a soothing antispasmodic nervine, and gently influences the menstrual flow. It is valuable as an alterative to cleanse the blood stream in strumous diseases"—that is, lymphatic swellings.

Julia Graves writes me from Normandy, "You do not mention *Calendula* as an emmenagogue, however this is one of the most basic all-over-Europe traditional indications. Also for dysmenorrhea." She explains: "It stimulates *upana vayu*, the downward bearing wind, or in other words, really increases the life force in the pelvic region. When I was young, an elderly farmer lady told me that she was using calendula tea for all her female farm 'interns' (students, etc., who wanted to spend some time on her organic farm) to relieve dysmenorrhea. She said it always helped."

As an "immune tonic" European peasants gathered the flowers throughout the year and threw them in soups in the fall and winter to warm and protect against wind and chill. In this regard it is an analog to astragalus. It prepares for the stress of winter by removing old lymphatic congestion and lingering infections.

Calendula flowers have a mild, sweet, slightly warm taste (similar to astragalus), and I used to classify the herb based on this, but Keith Robertson, NIMH, co-director of the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine, pointed out to me that the flowers are bitter, pungent, and even salty as well. It turns out I was only tasting the petals, which are basically sweet. He was (rightly) using the flower base as well.

TASTE:

sweet, bitter, pungent, salty • warm • resinous, astringent

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Yellow look about the eyes; tired eyes, feels and looks "bone weary"; sometimes the facial skin is red and dry; generalized yellow complexion.
- *Tongue; slightly puffy, pink or red papillae down the sides of the tongue* [spleen area]*, indicating unresolved lymphatic inflammation*.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Heavy depression; candida history.

LYMPHATICS

- *Swollen glands; residual after infections; unresolved infections*.
- Inflammation of the lymphatic ductwork, resulting in pain in the upper left side of the left chest (rarely, right) due to congestion of the thoracic duct.

RESPIRATION

- Bronchitis, asthma; associated with old, lingering infections.
- Deep cough; mucus yellow, green, sticky (combine with anise to thin mucus).

DIGESTION

- Tongue slightly puffy and atonic, with indentations; heat in the digestive mucosa.
- Gum disease, stomach irritation, ulcers, hemorrhoids.
- Mouth ulcers, stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, ulcers, diarrhea; soothes torn-up mucosa.
- Sluggish liver; high enzyme counts; viral hepatitis.

FEMALE

- Vaginal wall, irritated or dry, bleeding, tearing at childbirth.
- Vaginal warts.

- Fibroids at menopause or after partus.
- Leucorrhea.

OTHER

- *Lacerations, abrasions, burns, stings, bruises, blisters, chicken pox, measles, frostbite, acne; with redness, tenderness, swelling (external)*.
- Diaper rash; rash between the legs in damp, hot weather.
- Septic conditions, where tissue life is threatened.
- Prevents and lessens scar formation.
- Neuralgia, cramp.
- Positive psychological effect for people with fear of cancer.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The flowers are collected throughout the calends of the year and dried. Fresh flowers produce too watery an extract so they are traditionally dried for use in infusion or tincture. Fresh calendula flowers and leaves can be dried for direct external or internal use. Tincture, 10–15 drops up to 4x/day (Daniel Gagnon), 1–60 drops (John William Fyfe).

CAUTIONS:

Long used as a food and generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Chris Hafner, William Boericke, Matthew Wood (1), Kim Dudley (3), Matthew Becker (8), Samuel Hahnemann (15), Aviva Romm (7), Dorothy Hall (12–14), Julia Graves (10, 16), Yadubir Sinha (17), William LeSassier (2, 4, 21).

Capsella bursa-pastoris. Shepherd's Purse.

Shepherd's purse is a member of the mustard or Brassicaceae family native to Europe but extensively naturalized on disturbed earth in the temperate regions. It is rather unique in the family, partly for its taste and partly for the shape of its seedpod. In addition to the pungence we expect from the mustard family, shepherd's purse has a salty taste. It has a urinous or seaweedy smell, depending on the nose. The ripe seedpod looks like a traditional European shepherd's purse (bursa pastoris)*, hence the common and Latin names. (These purses were made from the scrotum of a goat.)* Capsella *contains flavonoids, carotenoids, vitamins A, K, and C, potassium, amino acids, and volatile oils (including camphor)*.

The old authors were at odds about whether it was hot or cold, but all agreed that it was drying or astringent. "It stops all sorts of bleeding whether inward, as spitting, vomiting, pissing of blood, or overflowing of the loches (lochia, after birth), or courses in women;

or outward, as that of wounds; and cures all sorts of fluxes of the belly of what kind soever. It cools or represses inflammations and Anthonie's Fire; cleanses mattering or running ears, and heals green wounds, … closing their lips; and is an especial thing for wounds of the head" (Salmon, 1710, 1035). I agree with those who consider it warming, because even when it "cools inflammations," as Salmon says, it acts on those conditions that need a stimulant to remove toxic matter (erysipelas, St. Anthony's Fire). Furthermore, it acts best on bleeding conditions where the blood is dark and oozing—where a stimulant is needed. Thus it contrasts with that other great hemostatic, yarrow. The latter is a "cooling antihemorrhagic" indicated in excited, red hemorrhaging.

Dr. Johann Gottfried Rademacher, the early-nineteenth-century Saxon Paracelsian, extended our knowledge of shepherd's purse from limited traditional indications. He noted that it was originally used for three basic purposes. The first was to staunch bleeding. However, this property was questioned by the science of his day because *Capsella* does not contain tannins and at that time tannins were considered the basis upon which plants stopped bleeding. In folk medicine, however, stimulants were used to stop bleeding. They work by increasing circulation to the extremities, which can soak up to twenty times their normal content of blood, thus taking blood away from the wound. The second traditional use of shepherd's purse in Rademacher's time was to stop diarrhea. This is another form of flux for which stimulants are suited as well as astringents (cf. *Erigeron*). The third use was to stem intermittent fever.

Rademacher used *Capsella* several times for chronic diarrhea due to relaxed or depressed intestines (not from the liver or gallbladder) and found it smartly effective, but he did not try it in intermittent fever, since this is usually complicated with the liver and gallbladder (the chills run through the autonomic and damage the timing and release of bile).

One day Rademacher accidentally discovered the fourth major usage for which shepherd's purse is now most famous. He was called to a woman suffering from kidney stones. The abdominal cavity was full of water and the lower extremities were edematous. The urine

was red in color from bloody sediments. He gave shepherd's purse 30 drops 5x/day to relieve the bleeding and was surprised to find that it removed vast quantities of the sediment. He let her continue, all of the sand passed, she started to urinate more, the edema disappeared, and she returned to good health. Since that time he tried it in many similar cases and eventually recommended it as a remedy for bloody, sedimentous urine. He also found that it removed sand so small that it could not be seen with the naked eye and deduced that *Capsella* might cleanse out hardening and plugging up in any organ, but especially the fine tubes of the kidneys. Since this time shepherd's purse has been used as a diuretic as well as for bloody diarrhea, bloody urine, and bleeding from the uterus.

A further key to understand this plant is provided by Maria Treben. She is the only author I am aware of who speaks of the action of shepherd's purse on atrophied muscles. *Capsella* is suited to conditions where muscle tone is poor. When the uterus does not expel the blood quickly, it sits and clots and is dark, the muscular wall atrophies, and fibroids may form. This is a good remedy for pre-menopausal women with uterine weakness, fibroids, profuse bleeding, and dark, clotted blood. When given in a well-indicated case, the woman may feel the uterus lift and move into the appropriate position within an hour of administration (Isla Burgess, Matthew Wood).

I sent some of the dried herb to a woman in Mississippi who was suffering from a continual uterine hemorrhage. She felt the uterus lift up shortly after taking an infusion and was permanently cured. I still get Christmas cards from her occasionally, twenty years later. My friend Lise Wolff, herbalist (AHG), of Minneapolis, passed on a similar case. A thirty-nine-year-old woman had a heavy, thick, dark menstrual discharge with cramping. After shepherd's purse the period was fine and she conceived a healthy baby boy. In another case a woman reported that the remedy made her feel "sparkling and warm inside" the womb.

Here's an old case history. "Dr. von Ehrenwall relates a recent case of puerperal hemorrhage, which had defied all the ordinary remedies and for which, at the suggestion of a neighbor, he tried an

infusion of the Shepherd's purse weed, with the result that the bleeding stopped after the first teacupful of the infusion had been taken a few minutes" (Fernie, 1914, 470).

Here is a case involving fibroids. A fifty-three-year-old woman, somewhat thin and dry, was suffering from uterine fibroids with continual bleeding. Shepherd's purse tincture stopped the bleeding within the first few weeks. A year later an x-ray showed that the fibroid had migrated from the muscle to the inner wall of the uterus and could now easily be removed. The radiologist mentioned that the shape of the uterus had returned to normal from an elongation. I felt confident of shepherd's purse in this case because the woman had some inguinal hernias repaired in the past and had extreme bloating before the period—both characteristic symptoms.

Shepherd's purse is indicated when the walls of the bladder are atrophic, leading to weak expulsion of urine. Deposits and sediments may build up and the urine is heavy, dark, and in some cases, bloody. It is also a remedy for abdominal hernia, a condition that is often seen when the other pelvic muscles are weak and atrophic.

An understanding of the mental symptoms associated with shepherd's purse was developed by Dr. G. F. Parks, a nineteenth-century American eclectic. "It works best in those women that are of a high-strung, ambitious nature, who generally do the work of two or three ordinary women. I say women, as it is a woman's remedy, although I have had good results with it in some of my male patients. For these I give it in acute gonorrhea where they just slobber. But in these cases they must be of that high-strung nature, exceedingly anxious to get rid of that drain." He also used it for teenage girls passing large amounts of clear, limpid urine, free of albumin. They are generally the sort who "are anxious to get out into the world to do something for themselves." He describes many of the traditional uses in addition (*Ellingwood's Therapeutist*, 1909, 3:12).

TASTE:

pungent, salty • slightly diffusive

TISSUE STATES:

depression, excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Women; thin to medium build; tendencies of muscles to atrophy; uterine fibroids; subinvolution of the uterus.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Ambitious, high-strung, anxious; anxious to recover.
- Strong above, weak below.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Cardiovascular stimulating tonic; promotes circulation to the extremities, increases coronal perfusion, reduces blood pressure, may increase myocardial tone.

DIGESTION

- Peptic ulceration, bloody vomitus.
- Acute or chronic diarrhea; irritable bowel syndrome, hemorrhoids, passive intestinal hemorrhage, i.e., dark, oozing.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Sluggish kidney and bladder function; heavy, dark, concentrated urine (without fever), frequent desire to pass urine; deposit of phosphates, sediment, blood; edema; irritation of the urinary tract, cystitis.

FEMALE

- Chronic menorrhagia; menses occurs too frequently or continue too long or are almost constant; barely recovers from one

period when another starts; oozing, dark, clotted blood; uterine hemorrhage with violent cramping.
- Leucorrhea, oozing, bloody.
- Pain in the back or general bruised sensation; sore pain in womb on rising.
- *Uterine fibroids (cf.* Achillea*); oozing discharge of blood, dark and clotted.*
- Menstrual hemorrhage; sluggish, slow, oozing, dark; miscarriage; discharge between periods.
- Postpartum; subinvolution of the uterus; oozing, dark, clotted bleeding; *Capsella* will often lift the uterus even after one dose.

EXTREMITIES

- Rheumatism (apply green herb).
- Gout, acute attacks; or other conditions where uric acid is elevated.
- Atrophy of muscles and limbs.
- Hernia; weakness of the pelvic ring.
- Varicose veins.

FEVER

- Intermittent fever; malaria, protozoal fever.

WOUNDS

- Wounds that ooze and won't stop bleeding; nosebleed.
- Bruises, strains.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The aboveground plant or the entire plant including roots is picked at flowering in the spring and extracted fresh in alcohol. The hemostatic properties are said to be lost on drying. Tincture, 30 drops (J. G. Rademacher); 15–30 drops, 3x/day (Daniel Gagnon); 5–60 drops (John William Fyfe); 1–5 drops (Matthew Wood).

CAUTIONS:

Large or persistent doses can cause heart palpitations. Not to be used during pregnancy. Depresses thyroid function.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (4–5, 7–11, 13, 19–21), J. G. Rademacher (6–8), William Boericke (7–10), Daniel Gagnon (15), George Park (2), Maria Treben (10, 15, 17), Matthew Wood (1, 3, 11, 13), Isla Burgess (13), Christopher Menzies-Trull (4, 5, 6, 14, 18–19).

Carduus marianus. Milk Thistle.

See Silybum marianum.

Carica papaya. Papaya.

This fruit is used, fresh or dried, as a digestive aid. It emulsifies fats, begins the breakdown of proteins, and converts starches to maltose. “We think of it where patient complains an hour or so after meals of pain in the bowels, general distress during digestion in the stomach and bowels. Useful in failing digestion in fevers, digestive disorders in pregnancy [but not early pregnancy, see below], catarrh of the stomach [watery mucus in stomach]. In neuralgic pains, pains occurring before meals or continued pains it is of no value. The powder as a solvent of the false membrane of diphtheria is of great value” (Petersen, 1905, 110).

“Women in Sri Lanka eat papaya fruit as a natural contraceptive. Papain, a powerful protein breaking enzyme, attacks progesterone, a hormone essential for conception. Papain becomes 24 times more active in the blood stream by interacting with a protein from the blood, and confirms papaya fruits’ ability as a natural contraceptive” (Christopher Menzies-Trull, 2003, 511).

Carthamus tinctorius. Safflower.

Safflower is a member of the Asteraceae, or sunflower, family native to central Asia, from which place it has been brought both East and West, as a crop, and so introduced into medicine from Europe to China. It is used in Arabic medicine—"Carthamine cleanses the three natures, bitter, sweet, and salty" (Chalid Ottway, 1933, 167). In traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts safflower is used to remove blood stagnation, adhesions, and bruises. In Western herbalism it is used to cleanse the blood of septic infection and bring rashes to the surface. These symptom-pictures may be united: we see an overall tendency to stagnant and septic blood.

Safflower is indicated in bruises where there is a septic quality to the blood, from reinjury or from limited circulation. Like its cousins achillea and arnica it is suited to cases where the bruise has a red and blue aspect, indicating recent injury, with active oxidation or fever, but it has a darker cast, indicating stagnation. In addition it

acts markedly on vascular spasm, so that it controls the blood flow via the nervous system, and probably also has some action on clotting and internal reabsorption of blood from a wound, like yarrow and arnica.

I had a case where a woman was brought in by her partner, pretty much against her will, in a sulky mood. Several years previous she had received a bad injury to a hand in a machine accident, almost costing her the hand and leaving it somewhat paralyzed. It was still noticeably blue and gray, and the fingers were subject to Raynaud's disease (turning white or purple and freezing in the winter). Safflower did her so much good that she called me back to sincerely thank me and to apologize for her bad attitude. I felt rewarded both by her kind change of heart and by the great lesson I learned in this case: safflower is not only for bruises, but for Raynaud's disease and for neurovascular spasm in the blood vessels. I have since lost track of that woman, but I would like to tell her: "You have helped many people since I learned from you this valuable indication."

As a stimulant to the circulation, safflower moves the blood to the surface to detoxify in fevers and was traditionally used to bring the rash out to the skin in smallpox, thus preserving the internal organs and nervous system from damage by toxins. I remember a case where a young mother caught chicken pox from her baby. Already weak and feeble, she was about the last of my regular clients I would have wished this on. She had a fever of 105°F for five days before she called me (she was also impoverished). I made a house call on a Sunday afternoon when the stores were closed. I had no safflower tincture with me, but fortunately she had the oil in her refrigerator. A teaspoonful brought the fever down quickly and after a few days on this she was well recovered.

Any remedy for congested blood is likely to be a uterine medicine. The late Matthew K. Cameron (1989, 129), an herbalist in Toronto, wrote that safflower "will restore the menstrual discharge and stop chronic blood discharge from the uterus."

Safflower cooking oil is said to have a positive effect on the liver and pancreas. By stirring and cleaning the blood safflower herb detoxifies the portal circulation and decongests the intestine,

removing constipation, bloating, and gas and improving blood supply to these organs. However, it also has an influence on the metabolism, especially involving sugar. Cholesterol-reducing properties are attributed to the oil and there may be an influence on the positive use of lipids, cholesterols, and sugar. When the flowers are aged the volatile oils interact with oxygen to form a sweet compound that is nourishing to the endocrine system.

The first I ever heard about safflower was from a conventional, middle-aged man who came into our alternative style herb store looking for safflower. He brought out a copy of the herbal by Penny C. Royal, which I had never gotten much use out of—it just lists names of diseases and symptoms without a pattern. He said this book nailed his condition exactly: safflower was for hypoglycemic persons who easily got sore muscles on exertion from lactic acid trapped in them. That was much too exact a symptom for that book, but I looked at the page he was holding out to me and there it was. That is about the only specific symptom in Penny C. Royal's herbal. And I remembered it after that, and also the fact that his eyelids were very red, in case that had anything to do with safflower—jury still out on that one, twenty years later.

Like its cousin arnica, safflower is good for bruises or trauma with shock. A woman reacted badly to the cement used by her dentist to fix a crown. Even while in the dental chair her mouth started to burn and she became agitated. Three weeks later she came to see me. She was agitated all day, slept little, and always awoke with the burning in her mouth. Clearly she was still reacting to the cement. And just as clearly, she was in shock. Her tongue was somewhat blue, her pulse raised and choppy, her mind constantly afflicted, her skin sweaty. I didn't have arnica (for shock and congealed blood) so I gave safflower tincture. This calmed her down right away. She needed the dose several times an hour at first but this brought her the first security since the original trauma three weeks previous. Meanwhile, I had her start a detoxification program that I won't go into here.

TASTE:

sweet, slightly pungent • warm

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Stagnant and congealed blood; septic conditions of the blood; incomplete circulation; uric acid buildup*.
- *Bluish-reddish complexion* (cf. *Achillea, Arnica*).

HEAD

- Hysteria, melancholy, illusions.
- Red, irritated eyelids (?).

RESPIRATION

- Cough, bronchitis, asthma, tuberculosis.
- *Hardened phlegm*.

DIGESTION

- Poor appetite; *heartburn;* pain, distention, and fullness in the epigastrium; constriction in the chest due to poor digestion; wind and gas.
- Stomach ulcer.
- Diverticulitis (cf. *Achillea*).
- Diarrhea and constipation.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- *Liver sluggish;* lack of bile, constipation, obstruction, *jaundice*.

HEART AND CIRCULATION

- Strengthens the heart.
- Cholesterol, supposed to lower (fixed oil in cooking).
- Pelvic congestion in women, lower abdominal pains, clotted blood, obstructed flow, menstrual pain, abdominal masses.

KIDNEYS

- Increases the flow of urine; kidney stones.

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea and menorrhagia.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL, EXTREMITIES

- Arthritis, gout; poor circulation to the periphery; cool, moist skin of hands and arms.
- *Raynaud's disease* (cf. *Achillea, Xanthoxylum*).
- Hypoglycemic persons who get sore muscles easily; sore muscles from retention of lactic acid.
- Prevents soreness after exercise.

FEVER

- *Fever with rash, septic tendencies; brings the rash to the surface*, cleanses the blood, regulates the periphery, normalizes perspiration.
- *Children's fevers; chicken pox, scarlet fever*, measles, mumps. In the old days it was used for smallpox.
- Boils, hives.

WOUNDS

- Bruises with septic tendency; blue/red color to the injury.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion of the flowers, 1 tablespoonful per cup, 1–3x/day. Dose of the tincture, 3 drops, 1–3x/day (Matthew Wood).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1, 12, 17, 21–24), Chinese herbalism (1, 24), Louise Tenney (1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 17, 22), Penny C. Royal (19), Matthew Wood (2, 4, 16, 18, 20, 24), Phyllis Light (18), Maude Grieve (22), Chalid Ottway (3, 5, 7, 23), Matthew Cameron (16).

Carum carvi. Caraway.

Caraway is native to the Middle East and Europe, but naturalized widely in Asia and North America. Plinius says it is named for the province of Caria, in Asia Minor. The names Carum carvi *and caraway come down to us through the Arabic* karawya. *However, no nation seems to love the seeds (or fruits, really) more than the Germans and Dutch. They cultivate and use the seeds in cooking, pastry, and baking.*

I was surprised to find caraway growing in northeastern Minnesota, close to Lake Superior, where the climate is brutal, windy, and cold. Later I was informed that it is grown as a crop and widely naturalized on the Canadian prairies. That grown in northern latitudes is supposed to have more activity. Caraway seed (fruit) contains volatile oils (including carvone and limonene), flavonoids, polysaccharides, protein, fixed oil, and calcium oxalate.

Caraway is a bitter, pungent carminative used to remove gas and improve digestion in European cooking and medicine. The German phytotherapist Dr. Rudolf Weiss (1988, 69) established a context from which to view caraway. He places the three carminative umbelliferae—caraway, fennel, and anise—on a continuum from the most bitter to the most sweet, respectively. The former is most provocative of secretions whereas the latter is most nutritive. Along with cumin, these three constitute the “four greater hot seeds” of Greek medicine—used to stimulate digestion.

Caraway fruit contains volatile oils and fixed oils, so it especially has an action on the digestion of fatty foods and the lipid metabolism. Overall, the seed or fruit is pungent, oily, bitter, and

slightly astringent, with a warm temperature. Yet it has some cooling constituents as well—limonene and flavonoids. The bitter tinge stimulates the flow of digestive juices and reduces inflammation. The astringence gives it an action on atonic digestive mucosa and autonomic debility. It has a normalizing effect—warming up tissues that are tense and tightening tissues that are loose. These properties together give caraway an affinity to sub-acid states of the digestive tract with tension, flatus, and the beginnings of inflammation; or with lack of tissue tone, pallor from poor nutrition, and diarrhea. It also can be used as a gargle for mild inflammation of the throat, or respiratory conditions with slight irritation, before serious inflammation has set in and the cough-reflex is overstimulated. Consequently it is used for bronchial spasm, asthma, and as an expectorant.

"In olden times," writes Grieve (1931, 157), caraway "was deemed to confer the gift of retention, preventing the theft of any object which contained it, and holding the thief in custody within the invaded house. In like manner it was thought to keep lovers from proving fickle (forming the ingredient of love potions), and also to prevent fowls and pigeons from straying. It is an undoubted fact that tame pigeons, who are particularly fond of the seeds, will never stray if they are given a piece of baked Caraway dough in their cootie."

TASTE:

pungent, bitter • oily, slightly astringent and diffusive

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Pallor in young girls.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Hysteria.

RESPIRATION

- Deafness (caraway seed tincture in oil of sweet almonds; a drop in the ear).
- Earache.
- Sore throat, laryngitis (gargle), colds, bronchitis.
- Incipient respiratory infections, especially in children.
- Asthmatic spasm.
- Pleurisies, pains, and stitches in the sides.

DIGESTION

- Bad breath.
- *Lack of appetite*.
- "A weak and enfeebled stomach" (Salmon); "a cold, languid stomach" (Fernie).
- Flatulent dyspepsia, fermentation in stomach.
- Intestinal *colic*, especially in infants and children.
- Hiatal hernia, stomach ulcers.
- Diarrhea.
- Settles the stomach after taking nauseant medicines.
- Heal the bowels after the use of purgatives.

FEMALE

- *Menstrual cramps*.
- Deficient menstrual flow.
- Deficient milk production.

OTHER

- Bruises (external).
- Old, stinking ulcers, boils, fractures, contracted and benumbed members (externally, anointed in palm oil).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The fruit is eaten plain or can be made into an infusion or cordial. Crush them to release the volatile oils, and pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1 teaspoonful, steep 10–15 minutes. Soak the crushed fruits in wine to produce a cordial.

CAUTIONS:

Overuse can cause drying. The distilled oil can be neurotoxic.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–15, 18, 20), Dioscorides (1), William Salmon (3, 8, 9, 11, 17, 22), Maude Grieve (1, 2), Rudolf Weiss, Robert Dale Rogers (13), Louise Tenney (17, 19), Meyrick (quoted by Grieve) (21), W. T. Fernie (1, 4, 11).

Centaurium erythraea. Centaury.

Centaury is a member of the gentian family long used in European medicine as a digestive bitter. The name comes from Chiron the Centaur, master of arts and crafts, including medicine. He used this plant to cure himself of a serious wound. Centaury contains a bitter iridoid (amarogentin), bitter triterpenoids, phenols, alkaloids, and flavonoids.

This popular European folk remedy is still so widely picked by home herbalists that wild populations have been placed under environmental protection in parts of Europe. It has long been used in a manner similar to gentian as a bitter tonic to invoke secretions from the stomach, gallbladder, and liver and to reduce chills and fever in malarial and intermittent fever. It is considered strengthening in convalescence—in stomach weakness following acute disease—and old age. A specific indication is given by Fernie

(1914, 86): “For languid digestion, with heartburn after food, and a want of appetite, the infusion prepared with cold water, an ounce of the herb to a pint, is best.”

“The flower essence has indications for servility and lack of courage to say no and stand up for oneself. These are analogous to its action on the gallbladder, the organ associated with the will and courage in traditional Chinese medicine” (Julia Graves).

TASTE:

bitter, acrid, pungent

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Convalescence; run-down people suffering from lack of appetite, dyspepsia, languid digestion, and heartburn, worse after eating.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Overly servile; can’t say no; lacks courage (flower essence).
- Depression associated with digestive disturbance.

HEAD

- Eyes (external).

DIGESTION

- Sore mouth, aphthous ulcers, inflamed gums (mouthwash).
- Poor appetite; tardy, languid digestion, dyspepsia; heartburn after food, gas, ulcers.
- Worms.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Weakness of the liver, gallbladder; jaundice; oversecretion of bile.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Incontinence, weakness of bladder control; in the sick, weak, and elderly.

FEMALE

- *Amenorrhea*.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscular rheumatism (fibromyalgia).

FEVER

- Intermittent fever, chills alternating with fever; resulting in biliousness.

SKIN

- Eczema.

EXTERNAL

- Wounds and sores.

OTHER

- Kills lice and fleas.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The flowering plant is used, often in combination with other herbs in European herbalism.

CAUTION:

Now considered to be environmentally endangered in some parts of Europe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Edward Bach (2), Christopher Menzies-Trull (3), Louise Tenney (1, 6–14), W. T. Fernie (6).

Centella asiatica. Gotu Kola, Hydrocotyle.

This is an old Ayurvedic remedy that has been used in the West since the nineteenth century and is currently quite popular as a cerebral and longevity tonic. It contains a wide range of medicinally active constituents, including triterpene saponins (stimulates the skin), flavonoids, alkaloids, volatile oils (terpenoids), bitters, fatty acids, sterols, resins, tannins, proteins, and phenols. It stimulates blood flow in the capillaries, reduces venous stagnation and insufficiency, improves cholesterol balance, helps to break down aged blood cells, reduces urea in the blood (acidity), and increases circulation to the extremities and brain. Gotu kola is therefore used for mental fatigue, lower vitality, senility, and high blood pressure. It combines three of the most inactive and deteriorative tissue states: depression, relaxation, and atrophy.

TASTE:

pungent, sweet, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

depression, relaxation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Mental and physical fatigue, nervous breakdown*.
- Anxiety, depression.
- Senility.
- Loss of memory.
- Drug withdrawal (cf. *Avena*).

HEAD

- Retinal detachment.
- Acne, dermal ulcers.

RESPIRATION

- Sinusitis.
- Tonsillitis.
- Influenza.
- Pleurisy.

HEART AND CIRCULATION

- *Hypertension*, high cholesterol.

DIGESTION

- Peptic ulcers.
- Diarrhea, cholera.
- Anal fissure, fistula, hemorrhoids.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

1. Edema.
2. Bladder ulcerations, syphilis.

SKIN

- Inflammation of the skin, involving microorganisms; lupus, scleroderma, dermal tuberculosis, psoriasis, leprosy (reduces decay), septic wounds (external).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, rheumatism, damaged ligaments and tendons, tendinitis.
- Parkinson's disease.
- Varicose veins and ulcers; static leg ulcers.

FEVER

- Fever.

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

- Thyroid gland, low function contributing to "emotional depression, dry skin, cold extremities, poor digestion, weight gain, and/or little endurance" (Daniel Gagnon).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Care should be taken to obtain high quality gotu kola leaf, since this plant is native to polluted drainage ditches in India (perhaps a signature showing its excellence in clearing out the blood). Infusion, 1–3 ounces. Tincture, 12–30 drops, morning and mid-afternoon (Daniel Gagnon). Capsules, 5–10 #0 (30 to 60 grains).

CAUTIONS:

Can produce sleeplessness if taken in the evening.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Christopher Menzies-Trull, Louise Tenney, Daniel Gagnon (23).

Cetraria islandica. Iceland Moss.

Iceland moss is a lichen native to bare, rocky slopes in the Far North. Like most other lichens it contains mucilage. It also contains bitters. This makes it an appropriate medicine in atonic conditions of the mucosa, where there is dryness and undersecretion. Such a state is often found after a chronic bronchial catarrh with recurrent, continuous cough resulting in weakness and exhaustion. Thus, it is especially applicable in the elderly, and in asthenic *(vata)* persons, and those suffering from chronic and protracted coughing. It is a traditional remedy in tuberculosis. The bitters also stimulate gastric secretion, autonomic activity, and the vasomotor sphere (Weiss, 1988, 199).

TASTE:

bitter • mucilaginous

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Weakly children, invalids, aged persons.
- Asthenic (thin), pale, anemic.

RESPIRATION

- Hoarseness, dryness.
- Catarrh and congestion.
- Coughs, dry and irritative.
- Bronchitis.
- Tuberculosis; repetitive coughing.

DIGESTION

- Diarrhea, dysentery.

- Gastritis.

FEMALE

- Lactation.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The decoction is preferred to deliver the mucilage; 1 teaspoonful to a cup, morning and evening for several months (Rudolf Weiss).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–9), Rudolf Weiss (2), Louise Tenney (1).

Chamomilla recutita, C. matricaria, Matricaria chamomilla.
German Chamomile.

Several plants go by the name chamomile, all belonging to the Asteraceae or compositae family. Two of them are used in herbal medicine, Chamomilla matricaria *and* Anthemis nobilis, *called "German chamomile" and "Roman camomile" respectively. They have been used interchangeably since antiquity and their uses are not well differentiated in the literature: not even in homeopathy. Both contain a blue volatile oil (azulene), long considered the "active ingredient" responsible for the majority of medicinal properties. It is relaxant and antiallergenic. In addition* Chamomilla *contains flavonoids (cooling and relaxing), bitter sesquiterpene lactones (stimulate digestive juices), volatile oils (antipyretic and antispasmodic), mucilage (soothing, nutritious, immunostimulating), amino acids, fatty acids, and coumarins. The fresh preparations, preserving the volatile oils, are relaxant, whereas the dried preparations are bitter and promote secretions to the stomach, GI, and liver.*

Chamomile is a folk medicine of great antiquity in Europe. It is primarily used for tension, pain, and fever, especially where the digestive tract is involved: especially the mouth and teeth, stomach, and intestines. It is suited to conditions where there is mental and physical tension and spasm. Unlike agrimony, which does not express anger, the chamomile person (often a child) complains, whines, and demands. They are angry and they show it. Where agrimony holds the breath, chamomile breaths out loudly to let you know they *need* your attention. As soon as you give it, chamomile snaps at you. It is suited to babies, "babies of any age." Repetitive pain that becomes difficult to bear, hence menstrual cramps. The pains of chamomile are not really that terrible, but there is a low threshold of pain, and the person lets you know it. "I can't bear it" is a common expression.

Chamomile has a long history of use in folk medicine as a sedative for cross, whining, irritated babies, and the problems incident to babyhood, such as teething, earaches, and intolerance to pain. The child is peevish, whining, complaining, angry, demands attention and petting. Demands a toy, then throws it on the floor. Whatever

the age, the behavior is unmistakable. “Babies of any age,” as I say. Petulant, self-centered, intolerant of pain or not having their way, inclined to pick quarrels, yet averse to being touched, soothed, or spoken to. It is not suited to infants *(Sambucus)* or children *(Cichorium)*, but to babies. In health, the chamomile person is as “sweet as a baby.”

Certain structures of the body are more susceptible to treatment by chamomile. The sensory organs (ears, eyes, teeth, and sexual organs) are especially irritable (here use the fresh preparations with their relaxing volatile oils). The sympathetic innervations involving the gastrointestinal tract and gallbladder are also strongly influenced (here use the bitter preparations). Many cases of earache and toothache have been cured with chamomile.

Chamomilla is suited to conditions where wind (tension) combines with heat (overstimulation, excitation, irritation). Thus, the fever is irregular and comes and goes; one cheek red, the other pale (homeopath Carrol Dunham). It is an old remedy for intermittent fever. William Salmon (1692, 13) writes in *Practical Physick*, “I have oftentimes cured tedious quartans and tertians, by giving half a pint of the crude juice of camomille, an hour before the coming of the fit, and repeating the same dose for four or five fits.”

Chamomilla “stimulates the body to put calcium in serum. Doesn’t sedate HCl production. Balances emotional and astral energies. If a lactating woman drinks chamomile tea, it will affect her nursing baby,” notes William LeSassier. “I practice in New York City, where everybody whines all the time. If they whine I send them home with chamomile and start more active treatment at the next session.”

W. T. Fernie (1914, 91) recounts that chamomile is a physician to the plant world. He relates: “It is remarkable that each chamomile is a plant physician, since nothing contributes so much to the health of a garden as a number of chamomile herbs dispersed about it. Singularly enough, if another plant is drooping and apparently dying, in nine cases out of ten it will recover if you place a herb of chamomile near it.”

TASTE:

sweet, pungent, bitter • cooling, drying • oily

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, constriction, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Children, during teething, "terrible twos"; fretful, must be carried all the time; wants different things, throws them away when getting them; nightmares. Adults who act in a similar manner; i.e., "babies of any age." Improves self-esteem. "Sweetens the soul."*

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Petulant, quarrelsome, vitiated humor; inclines to be angry and out of sorts with everything and everybody; very impatient, can hardly answer with civility; contrary to normal condition, out of humor, particularly at menses or when sick.*
- *Whining, peevish, complaining, wants attention but rejects it; low resistance to pain.*
- *Children whose emotional upsets cause digestive trouble.*

HEAD

- Dandruff.
- Facial neuralgia.
- Eye irritation, conjunctivitis (wash), earache.
- Aphthous ulcers (canker sores) and gum disease; associated with stomach heat.
- Tongue tends to be irritated along the sides; coated white-yellow in the middle.
- Stiff neck.

RESPIRATION

- *Acute colds, fevers, flu, coughs, earache*.
- Bronchitis, spasmodic cough, catarrh, asthma.

DIGESTION

- *Acute digestive upset, coming on after vexation and anger; with heat of the face, thirst, taste of bile, nausea, vomiting of bile, anxiety, restlessness*.
- Colic in babies, with pain and whining.
- Lack of appetite.
- Cramps, colic, diverticulitis, colitis, diarrhea, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, *stomach ulcers; from stress and tension*.
- Hemorrhoids, anal fissure.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Liver and gallbladder upset; jaundice, gallstones, gallstone colic.
- "Subacute inflammation or congestion of the liver with green stool, soreness of the anus with colic" (Menzies-Trull); *green, watery diarrhea* (Rolla Thomas).

FEMALE

- *Menstrual pain and cramping associated with great tenderness; cannot be borne with any patience; pain in the abdomen and breasts, cysts*.
- Pregnancy: false labor pains.
- Breast disorders: mastitis, abscess (external).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema.
- Enuresis.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Tightness and tension in the tendons, ligaments, muscles, and extremities; paralytic pains, with numbness and tearing, in the

extremities; convulsion, spasm, tightness, rheumatic pain and neuralgia.
- Bruising, cramp, rheumatic muscular pain, gout, articular pains.
- Carpal tunnel syndrome.

FEVER

- *Incomplete fever; excitement, increased sensibility, prostration; heat partial, confined to one cheek; profuse sweat of the head. The fever does not last long, but often recurs*.
- Intermittent fever (alternating fever and chills with incomplete expression) (cf. *Eupatorium perfoliatum*).

SKIN

- *Abscess, pus formation, especially in the face, jaws, with tenderness and pain*.
- Irritation and swelling from any cause.
- Eczema, psoriasis, urticaria, burning, burns, blisters, radiation burns, acne.
- Impetigo.
- Skin; light-, delicate-skinned people with excessive sensitivity.

OTHER

- Pulse small, tense, rapid.
- Car sickness, motion sickness.
- *Nightmares, night terrors* (infusion at night).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The same conditions are met by the material herb, the tincture, and the homeopathic potencies. However, the fresh preparations preserve the relaxing volatile oils, whereas the dried herb brings out the bitters. The homeopathic preparations are made from the fresh juice of the herb. The essential oil can be used in external preparations. Some of the ingredients are only extracted in alcohol.

CAUTIONS:

A few people are allergic to chamomile. Herbalist Daniel Gagnon, of Santa Fe, wondered just how toxic chamomile actually is. He searched twentieth-century references and found six confirmed cases of serious reaction. More than sixty million bags of chamomile tea are dispersed per day.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Rudolf Weiss, Julia Graves (4, 14), Aviva Romm (10), Christopher Menzies-Trull (6, 8, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 31–33, 36, 37), Rolla Thomas (19), William LeSassier (34), Daniel Gagnon (15, 16). The most specific information comes from homeopathic provings and clinical experience, including the following indications and authors collected by Temple Hoyne: William Bayes (9), Samuel Hahnemann (13), Carrol Dunham (28), Adolph Lippe (35), Dr. Schall, quoted by W. T. Fernie (37).

Chelidonium majus. Celandine.

Chelidonium is a member of the poppy family native to Europe but widely naturalized in temperate regions. It possesses a bright orange sap. The doctrine of signatures led to the use of chelidonium as a decongestant for the yellow bile. However, it possesses many active properties such as we would expect in the poppy family, including isoquinoline alkaloids (antibacterial, antifungal), chelidonine, proteolytic enzymes (dissolve proteins, warts), sanguinarine (antitumor), chelidoxanthine (similar to berberine), fruit acids, flavonoids, and phenolic acids.

Chelidonium is primarily known as a liver and gallbladder remedy. According to the old authors, it is suited to conditions where the bile becomes thickened and is retained in the bile ducts, generating congestion and heat (Edwin Hale). The bile is thickened into stones and the walls of the gallbladder and ducts are inflamed. Bile backing up into the liver causes swelling and pain. The most characteristic symptoms are given in *Ellingwood's Therapeutist* (1908, 2, 6, 22): "Specifically there is a yellowish or greenish discoloration of the skin with usually more or less emaciation, there is pain in the right hypochondrium, sometimes full and distinct in character, at other times a throbbing pain or a short pain which extends through to the lower border of the right scapula."

Chelidonium is also suited to cases of migraine where the tension from the gallbladder and liver congestion moves back up through the scapula to the back of the head, from the occiput across the side of the head and into the eyes. This type of migraine is called "gallbladder headache" in traditional Chinese medicine because it follows the gallbladder meridian. Chelidonium is also one of the best remedies for migraine headache with pain coming up one side of the head or the other, with *great sensitivity to light in the eyes*, setting off the headache, nausea; sometimes all of this is even preceded by a sense of uneasiness in the gallbladder or the emotions. (These migraine symptoms were brought out in

homeopathic provings by O. Buchmann in the mid-nineteenth century, but they have been lost to subsequent homeopathic literature and are not influential in herbalism.)

In addition to dissolving stones in the gallbladder, chelidonium has an anti-fibrous capacity that has been used to break down warts, malignant tumors (especially in the abdominal region), fibroids in the uterus, and cataract. It has also been used for edema and swollen spleen associated with gallbladder problems.

Culpeper (1653) speaks highly of the properties of celandine in eye complaints. “This is an herb of the Sun, and under the celestial Lion, and is one of the best cures for the eyes; for, all that know any thing in astrology, know that the eyes are subject to the luminaries.” He is extremely certain of its virtues here. “I can prove it doth [by] both my own experience, and the experience of those to whom I have taught it, that most desperate sore eyes have been cured by this and only this medicine.” At this time “sore eyes” often meant glaucoma. And he is confident of its uses also for cataract. “For if this does not absolutely take away the film, it will so facilitate the work, that it might be done without danger” from surgical operations. Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 111) makes note of Culpeper’s enthusiasm on this point. “Bathing the eye with an infusion of the leaves and flowers of the greater celandine, favorite eye remedy of the famed herbalist of ancient times, Culpeper,” twice daily for cataract.

The psychological profile of chelidonium emphasizes gallbladder issues as much as the physical. It is associated with self-will and “taking authority,” either appropriately or inappropriately. It is a specific when people have abused “occult powers” by attempting to control them with their mind (Matthew Wood, Julia Graves).

TASTE:

bitter • hot • penetrating, sharp, stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

torpor, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Authority issues; too dominating, too dominated; taking authority for oneself.
- Indicated in people who have abused their will power, especially in relationship to the occult and spiritual practices, or in business.

HEAD

- Yellow, sallow, pallid complexion.
- *Migraine* starting in the occiput, extending over one of the temples and into the eye; *with light sensitivity* and nausea; better by darkness and rest.
- Cataract (external; traditionally a wash is made with goat's milk).
- Gunk in the eyes.

RESPIRATION

- Pneumonia with congestion in the lower lobe of the right lung, above the liver.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Dissolves fibrous tissue: *gallstones*, abdominal masses, uterine fibroids, cataracts.
- Congestion of the liver; *pain under the right scapula*.
- Absence of bile production; clay-colored stools with no jaundice (also, jaundice without clay-colored stools); constipation; scybalous stools (dry, hard balls).
- Congestion and heat in the gallbladder and ducts; gallstones, pain, heat, swelling.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Achy, dull, beat-up feeling in the muscles and bones; sprains, strains, influenza.
- “Dull, stretchy, tired feeling, cold extremities” (Petersen, 1905, 67).

ABDOMEN

- Fibrous tissue, cancer, in the abdomen or female system.

SKIN

- Warts (fresh juice externally).

OTHER

- “Full, pale, sallow tongue and mucous membrane, skin pale, doughy, sometimes even greenish” (Petersen, 1905, 67).
- Pulse slow.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The fresh green leaves are picked in the spring and fall. Best if extracted fresh in alcohol immediately or freeze-dried. Somewhat toxic and strong; the dose need not be great: 1 drop, 1–3x/day, or the homeopathic potencies (3x–30x).

CAUTIONS:

Toxic; dose limited to 10 drops.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 3), Julia Graves (1, 3), O. Buchmann (quoted by Temple Hoyne) (homeopathic provings: 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12), J. G. Rademacher,

Chanchal Cabrera (14), Nicholas Culpeper (15), Frederick Petersen (13, 16, 17), Rolla Thomas (10).

Chondrus crispus. Irish Moss.

Irish moss is a seaweed native to areas where fresh water and salt water meet (William LeSassier). It contains mucilage, polysaccharides, and minerals. The mineral content of chondrus is quite important. Dr. Edward Shook writes (1978, 29), "You will doubtless remember that we told you that Irish moss (Chondrus crispus) *contained the organic salts of potassium phosphate (brain and nerve food), calcium phosphate (bone food), magnesium phosphate (found in every cell in the body), together with chlorides, sulfates, iodides, and bromides, all beautifully balanced in ideal proportions which could never be equaled by any trituration process man could invent."*

Chondrus is mucilaginous, sweet, and salty, thus highly fitted for use in moistening, nourishing, mineralizing, and soothing tissue. It is particularly used for congenital weakness, tuberculosis, convalescence, and old age, in cases where there is dry, irritated mucosa and especially if there is glandular enlargement (thyroid, lymphatics, prostate). It also has a special affinity to the parathyroid gland, so that it helps the body pick up calcium, strengthens the glands and veins and probably the bones. We see these types of problems in children who are "born weak," with developmental problems and chronic glandular and respiratory trouble. The lack of calcium causes a predisposition to tuberculosis.

Because chondrus absorbs water and swells after consumption, it has a mechanical ability to fill the stomach and reduce appetite.

TASTE:

salty, sweet • slightly warm • mucilaginous, absorbent, astringent

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Congenital weakness, endocrine weakness, convalescence, tuberculosis, old age.
- Dried out, inflamed surfaces, dry, wrinkled skin, dried out mucus.
- Swollen *glands* (*thyroid*, lymphatics, prostate); *goiter*.
- Children with chronic respiratory problems, constitutional weakness.

RESPIRATION

- Chronic *bronchitis;* chronic catarrh and swollen glands; pneumonia, tuberculosis.

DIGESTION

- Bad breath.
- Peptic ulcers, gastritis.
- Diarrhea, dysentery.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Bladder weakness.

OTHER

- Varicose veins.
- Convulsions.
- Parathyroid cancer.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Decoction in water or milk, infusion, powder, capsules.

CAUTIONS:

Edible; generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Edward Shook, William LeSassier (4), Louise Tenney (1–3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10), Jack Ritchason (12).

Chrysanthemum parthenium, Tanacetum parthenium, Pyrethrum parthenium. Feverfew.

The genus name has been changed numerous times by taxonomists, but the species name parthenium *and the common name have remained in place.* Parthenium *refers to a young woman (gynecological uses) while feverfew comes from the Latin* febrifuga*—it was at one time considered an important fever remedy. It is native to stony ground in the Balkans and Greece, but widely grown for its horticultural and medicinal virtues. It contains volatile oils (beta thujone and camphor), steroidal compounds, mucilage, terpenes, tannins, resin, and melatonin.*

Feverfew can be used as a general, nonspecific remedy for migraines and arthritis, or it can be prescribed on precise indications based on an understanding of the constitutional makeup of the individual and the organ affinities and energetic action of the plant. As a nonspecific it is given continuously and is palliative, rather than curative. This usage was developed through clinical research by Dr. Stewart Johnson (1984).

As a specific, feverfew is not indicated in all migraines, but especially in conditions where blood congestion and stagnation cause fullness before the period, headache, heavy bleeding, and pain. The person has a pale, blue complexion that becomes full, red, and hot, with fever or headache; sluggish and depressed digestion

from poor circulation to the stomach, causing fermentation, flatulence (William LeSassier).

TASTE:

bitter, pungent • warm

TISSUE STATES:

stagnation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Stagnant blood; tendencies to varicose veins.
- Nervousness and low spirits.
- *Headache and migraine* from congestion of blood to the head, before the period; forehead full, pounding, throbbing, often involving the left eye and left temple; temple hot to the hand.
- Complexion normally blue and pale, turning red and full during the headache, during fever, before the period.
- Face ache, earache, tinnitus, dizziness.
- Inflammation of the eyes, hordeolum (lotion).
- Tonsillitis; diphtheria, diphtheritic membrane on the upper pharynx causing difficult breathing.
- Coughs, wheezing, difficult breathing, viscid mucus.
- Poor appetite, nausea.
- Diarrhea, thread worms, flatulence; pruritus ani (unguent).
- Hepatitis, jaundice.
- Abdomen full, congested, with poor liver function, constipation, clay-colored stool, worms.
- Renal disease, strangury, edema, gout.
- Sciatica, muscle spasm.
- Congestion before the period; full, red, swollen; headache; heavy bleeding, thick endometrium, clotted bleeding.

- Menopausal symptoms, hot flashes.
- Intermittent fever, chills, flu.
- Arthritic pain; rheumatoid arthritis (external, oil).
- Bites of insects, vermin, fleas, lice, scabies (wash with infusion).
- Varicose veins (lotion).
- Hypertension.
- Panic attacks.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Leaves and flowers, fresh, dried, and taken by infusion or capsule. Somewhat abortifacient. Small, persistent doses.

CAUTIONS:

Not to be taken during pregnancy.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (2, 3, 5, 7–20), Maude Grieve (2, 5, 12), William LeSassier (1, 3, 4, 8, 15), Christopher Menzies-Trull (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22).

Cichorium intybus. Chicory.

Chicory is a member of the Asteraceae family, distinguished by its rare blue flower. It was anciently used by the Greeks and Romans. Thessalus of Tralles (c. 50 CE) states that it is an herb of the sun; he reports learning his astrological medicine directly from the demigod Asclepius. The name chicory comes from the Greek kikorion. *The German name* wegwarten *refers to its favored environmental niche and also to the old Teutonic township position known in English as "highway master" or "overseer of the roads." To this day chicory is found along roadsides*.

A plant can act as an illustration of biological principles in the human or animal organism, if we can trace out the functions that they themselves depend upon, seeing their correspondences in the animal sphere. Rudolf Steiner (1975, 131) described such a plant as "an instructor in the realm of nature." He considered chicory to be a good example. Chicory is "an interesting subject for inquiry. One finds its effects extending fanlike in so many directions."

Steiner, like other traditional herbalists and physicians, considered the curative faculty of chicory to be due to its bitter constituents. These have an affinity to substances in the human organism that have not yet been broken down by digestive and metabolic processes and that still contain some of their original, external identity. Bitters are used in herbalism and medicine to enhance digestion and metabolism. Chicory helps to complete these processes, and then helps in the absorption of this material, first into the walls of the intestines, then into the blood. This absorptive property Steiner attributes to the potassium in chicory. After it has strengthened digestion, absorption, and metabolism, chicory

preserves the blood as it carries nutriment to the body, keeping it from becoming "slack in essential processes." Chicory then, with the help of silica, brings the nutritive materials to the periphery of the body, where they help build the skin, bones, nerves, and muscles. Thus, chicory strengthens those tissues that digest and assimilate food, the blood that carries the nutriment, and the periphery in which the nutriment is deposited—skin, senses, nerves. It has been used for developmental problems and atrophic limbs (see below).

Chicory was classified by Galen as one of the "four lesser cold seeds," along with lettuce, purslane, and endive. That means it is cooling and moistening. Avicenna saw chicory as the sovereign remedy for a hot liver. Moses Maimonides recommended it for both cold and hot liver. It is widely regarded by the old herbalists for eye problems, including inflammation. Dr. J. V. Cerney (1976, 120) considered endive juice (domesticated chicory) to be a specific for cataract. The liver is associated with the eye in traditional Chinese medicine. Chicory is often compared to its cousin dandelion, which is also used to facilitate liver and blood cleansing, or neatening up the metabolic economy of the body.

Father Sebastian Kneipp noted that chicory removes "mucus from the stomach, flushes out superfluous gall, purifies the liver, spleen and kidneys, and leads morbid materials out through the urine." It also will restore the stomach that has been upset "by any kind of food," assist digestion, and settle cramp and inflammation in the stomach.

The psychological profile of chicory was developed by Dr. Edward Bach. It is suited to people who remain in the selfish, self-centered stage of development characteristic of young children (age 5–6). Analogously, chicory root is used for developmental problems that remain stuck (hence, atrophic limbs).

The energetic profile was developed long ago. "French writers say it is *contra-stimulante*, and serving to correct the excitation caused by the active principles of coffee [to which it is frequently added], and therefore it suits sanguineo-bilious subjects who suffer from habitual tonic constipation. But it is ill adapted for persons whose vital energy soon flags, and for lymphatic or bloodless people its use

should be altogether forbidden" (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 497). The sanguine and bilious temperaments are both equivalent to *pitta* in Ayurveda. The former is more prone to heat conditions, the latter to dryness and atrophy, so they also correspond with the cooling and moistening properties associated with the plant.

TASTE:

moderately bitter and sweet • cool and moist

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Childishness, selfishness, emotional immaturity, needy, clingy, dependent (flower essence).

HEAD

- Headache, feverish head.
- Hot, inflamed eyes; especially in children.
- Amaurosis; loss of visual power in the eye.
- Cataract (endive or chicory juice).

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory congestion and bronchitis; especially in children.
- Hay fever and asthma (endive, carrot, and celery juice).

DIGESTION

- "Venous passive congestion in the digestive organs within the abdomen, and a fullness of blood in the head."
- Phlegm in the stomach; upset by food; cramp, indigestion.
- Constipation or diarrhea connected with bile problems.

- Malnutrition, cachexia, anemia, atrophy.
- “Sick and feeble persons that have weak, hot, and feeble stomachs.”

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Heat and congestion in the liver and gall ducts; gallstones, jaundice.
- “Bilious torpor”; low bile production and ejection, gallstones, constipation, anemia.
- Heat and congestion in the spleen, lymphatics, liver, and kidneys; swollen glands, edema, urinary tract infections.

FEMALE

- Anemia, atrophy, infertility.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, gout; calcium and uric acid deposition.
- Externally as a rub on atrophic limbs.

FEVER

- Epidemic, continual, or intermittent fever.

SKIN

- Pimples, welts, rashes, sores, inflamed and red eyes, mastitis.
- Externally on hot sores and inflammations.
- Skin affections associated with gout.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

All parts of the plant have been used, but the roasted root is most commonly available in commerce. The roots are best collected in rainy weather, when they can be more easily pulled out of the ground. Kneipp recommended a cup of the tea made from the root, morning and evening, for a period of time, until symptoms abate.

Externally, “Wegwartspiritus” or poultice on inflamed, atrophied, or decayed parts. The root is often roasted to provide a coffee-substitute, but this changes the properties of the plant. It is more bitter in this aspect, so it stimulates the digestion, liver, and bowel movements. J. V. Cerney (1976, 120) recommends the juice of endive leaves, the cultivated form of the plant.

CAUTIONS:

Edible; generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Edward Bach (1), Avicenna (13), Sebastian Kneipp (9, 18), Matthew Wood (6-confirmed), J. V. Cerney (5, 7), Louise Tenney (9, 11, 13, 14, 16), W. T. Fernie (3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 22).

Cinnamomum spp. Cinnamon.

Cinnamon has long been used in the medicine of the Old World. It is a small tree native to the Spice Islands. It was shipped to Rome, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, India, and China. The dried inner bark was taken in rolls (quills).

Cinnamon is warm and stimulating, so it tends to warm up the digestion and the interior, but it is also sweet and astringent, so it nourishes and tones. It is therefore indicated as a stimulating diaphoretic in weakness, tiredness, chilliness, and lack of resistance. As a stimulant it opens up the peripheral blood supply to lessen local bleeding. A tincture of the oil of cinnamon “is the most certain remedy I know in postpartum hemorrhage,” commented Rolla Thomas (1903). Finley Ellingwood (1918) combined it with oil of erigeron to make an oil famed for stopping bleeding of delivery. As

a warming astringent it is excellent for some kinds of diarrhea, where it restrains fluid loss. It has been shown to have an influence over the microorganisms associated with botulism, staph infections, aflatoxin, E. coli, and candida. “Terrific for diarrhea,” comments Aviva Romm. “There are no kind of Defluxions or Weaknesses but what it is of service,” writes John Quincy (1736).

TASTE:

sweet, pungent • warm • stimulating, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Tired, weak, cold, with low immunity, hypoglycemia*.

RESPIRATION

- *Cold, sinus congestion, flu, bronchitis, asthma; with chilliness and shivering.*
- Dull mind, difficulty breathing through the nose.

DIGESTION

- *Slow digestion with cold abdomen; abdominal spasm;* parasites (oil).
- *Flatulence, nausea, looseness of the bowels, diarrhea, griping pains, abdominal cramping;* worse from cold food; cholera.
- *Lowers the sugar spike after a meal; hypoglycemia, diabetes*.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Nephritis.

FEMALE

- *Menstruation: early and profuse, blood of a bright color, extremities cold, pale complexion.*
- *Postpartum: profuse flow, extremities cold, surface of the body pallid.*
- Menopause: pain and discomfort, chest pain, neck and back pain.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Rheumatism, cramping pain and swelling; worse from cold, damp weather.
- Lower back pain, abdomen cold.
- Coldness of the surface.
- Sore muscles (liniment ingredient).

FEVER

- Fever with chills (bark in hot wine).

WOUNDS

- Stops bleeding.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Cinnamomum cassia is an inferior substitute for *C. zeylanicum*. The whole quills keep longer and have a better flavor; they are preferred over the powder. The oil is also used; it is very hot and must be diluted. Tincture, 1 dram dose (Blackwood).

CAUTIONS:

Contraindicated during pregnancy.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Vasant Lad and David Frawley (1, 2), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (1, 2, 4, 5, 9), William Cook (5, 12), Finley Ellingwood (9, 16), Eva Graf, Jack Ritchason (4, 10, 12), dietary research, often confirmed (6), Alexander Blackwood (8, 9), Aviva Romm (14), Hildegard von Bingen (3, 14).

Citrus aurantium var. amara. Bitter Orange.

Bitter orange peel contains bitter principles, flavonoids, volatile oils (including limonene), and vitamins C and B_1. The flowers contain neroli essence, trace elements (manganese, cobalt, lithium, aluminum, phosphorus, and magnesium), bitters, and flavonoids.

Bitter orange has been long used in both European and Chinese herbal medicine. It is less commonly encountered in North American herbalism. In Europe the flowers, leaves, rind, and dried fruit are all used; in China the rind. It is bitter and cooling hence relaxing and sedative. It is used in nervousness, anxiety, insomnia, anguish, tachycardia, epilepsy, digestive spasms, dyspepsia, and aerophagia (swallowing air).

Citrus aurantium var. dulcis. Sweet Orange Peel, Orange Oil.

Orange peel has long been used in herbal medicine, both East and West, as a carminative to stimulate the stomach. Although lemon, grapefruit, and some kinds of oranges are sour and cooling, the sweet orange is a stimulant. The pores in the skin are oil glands that contain the volatile oil of sweet orange (90–96% limonene). The peel is so heavily impregnated with oils that they can be considered interchangeable with the oil. Dietrich Gümbel gives an extensive account of the use of the oil.

The dried peel of the sweet orange has long been used in European medicine as a carminative to warm and stimulate the stomach. “The

great use of the peel is in the tincture or infusion as a stomachic," writes Sir John Hill (1740, 285). "It is for this purpose to be pared off very thin, only the yellow part being useful, and to be put into brandy or wine, or to have boiling water poured on it fresh or dry. If a little gentian and a few cardamom-seeds be added to this tincture, or infusion, it is as good a bitter as can be made; it prevents sickness of the stomach and vomitings, and is excellent to amend the appetite."

Gümbel maintains that lemon oil acts on the posterior pituitary, whereas orange oil acts on the anterior pituitary. Sweet orange is warming and stimulating; the sour lemon, cooling and sedating. The effect of orange is to increase *kapha*. In other words, it promotes increased appetite and digestion, raises the blood sugar, and helps the cells plump up with water and nutrients. As a result, the skin is soft, full, velvety, and more sensitive. Although stimulating to digestive and dermic functions, orange causes relaxation and satisfaction. It also favors the soul-body connection, says Gümbel.

TASTE:

sweet, sour, pungent

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Cough.
- Bronchitis.
- Lack of appetite (contraindicated in excess appetite).
- Vomiting.
- Scurvy.
- Restorative after exercise (fresh orange juice with a pinch of sea salt).
- Nervous debility, anemia, in children.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Fresh orange. Dried orange peel. Orange oil.

CAUTIONS:

Overstimulates the stomach and appetite in people with hot, active digestion.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Hill (3–4), Swami Sada Shiva Tirtha (1–7), Dietrich Gümbel, David Winston.

Citrus medica var. limonum. Lemon, Lemon Peel, Lemon Oil.

Lemon peel, oil from the peel, and lemon juice from the fruit, are all used in herbal medicine. The oil is secreted in little glands that are evident on the surface of the peel. The predominate oils are limonene (90%) and citral (3.5–5%). The peel and oil are sour and astringent, the juice more purely sour. Both contain vitamin C. The following closely adheres to Gümbel's detailed account of the properties of lemon oil with indications from Ayurveda (Tirtha). Gümbel's portrait of lemon oil is exceedingly similar to my picture of another sour and astringent herb, sumach (Rhus typhina, R. aromatica, R. glabra). *It also fits my personal medicinal experience.*

Traditionally, lemon is used in fevers and sore throats to alleviate heat. As lemonade it is used to cool during the hot summer months. It has also been used to relieve heat conditions in the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and renal tracts. Externally, it appears in many formulas for improving the health of the skin. Although lemon is highly acidic, its internal effect is alkalinizing, and it is a standard dietary item in an "alkalizing diet." This is popular at present to antidote the acidifying diet of processed food.

Lemon oil stimulates the posterior pituitary, according to Gümbel, and therefore the secretion of antidiuretic hormone (vasopressin) and oxytocin. Hence, it tends to retain and concentrate the urine, regulate blood pressure, lower blood sugar levels, and contract the smooth musculature, including the whole gastrointestinal tract, gallbladder, gall duct, fallopian tubes, uterus, and blood vessels. The mind may also be concentrated and strengthened. Catabolism is increased, resulting in increased oxidation and need for blood sugar in the cells—hence it lowers blood sugar levels and is antiseptic and antitoxic. It stimulates both red and white blood cell production, and cell production in general. The oil is an "obstetrician" that can be used to increase and regulate uterine contraction at labor, or in overdue labor (Gümbel, 1993, 182).

I observed one case where Gümbel's indications were verified after three weeks on lemon juice in water. A middle-aged man who urinated excessively at night for more than ten years returned to normal, while the urine pH went up, as predicted by the alkalinizing theory. He also experienced less sudden urging to urinate and less leakiness.

The direct action of lemon oil on the skin intensifies the epidermis and sensory tissues, increasing the sense of touch, pain, itch, warmth/cold, and pressure. It increases cell multiplication to strengthen and thicken the epidermis, and brings more blood to the capillaries to nourish the periphery. By increasing blood flow to the surface it improves nutrition and fluid flow through the connective tissue, hence strengthening elastin, collagen, and immune processes. It improves tanning and healthy response to sunlight (cf. *Xanthoxylum*, another member of the citrus family). It is indicated in weak hair, nails, and skin, thin, soft skin, sensitive, easily burnt skin, and dry skin (Gümbel, 1993, 185).

Buttermilk and lemon face lotion is an old domestic remedy for improving the complexion and skin. "Add 1 tablespoonful of fresh lemon juice to 1 pint of sour buttermilk and wash the face and hands with it every night at bedtime. Also saturate a rag and apply to the face and let it remain on all night" (Russell, 1911, 326).

TASTE:

sour • cooling, drying • astringent (Gümbel, Tirtha)

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Sore throat (gargle with lemon juice in water).
- Colds, fevers, influenza.
- Bronchitis, asthma; decreases phlegm discharge.

DIGESTION

- Thirst.
- Digestive disorders.
- Excessive appetite, craving for sugar, high blood sugar.
- Heartburn (juice in water).
- Indigestion, gas (juice in water, with baking soda).
- Nausea, vomiting, indigestion, and mucus in the stomach (lemon juice and honey in water).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallstones, lack of good bile flow.
- Liver, spleen, pancreas; diabetes mellitus (peel, lemon oil).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Kidney stones, urinary gravel (juice in water with cilantro).
- Urination, excessive, at night.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, rheumatism, gout, neuralgia.

FEVER

- Summer heat, sunstroke (with salt).
- Fever; thirst, hot, dry skin (water with lemon juice).

SKIN

- Hot, dry skin, sunburn.

OTHER

- Scurvy; swollen, bleeding gums.
- Scurvy; bleeding from lungs, GI tract, kidneys, uterus.
- Lowered blood sugar levels and fat reduction due to alkalinization (lemon juice in water long term).
- Insect bites, nerve pain, disinfectant (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Lemon oil. Lemon juice. Juice a fresh lemon into about a quart of water and drink throughout the day. Lemon peel. Lemon tea. “Pour a pint of boiling water on the sliced lemons and add a pod of red pepper, let stand half an hour, strain, sweeten to taste” (Ralph Russell, 1911, 321).

CAUTIONS:

Peptic ulcer; do not take the juice with milk, mangoes, or tomatoes (Tirtha).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Swami Sada Shiva Tirtha (1–12, 14–20), Dietrich Gümbel, Ralph Russell (2, 12), Matthew Wood (6-confirmed, 13).

Cnicus benedictus, Carduus benedictus. Blessed Thistle.

This wild thistle is native to rough, stony ground in southern Europe, but more widely cultivated, both for its interesting beauty and medicinal properties. It was held in high esteem in the Middle Ages, as indicated by the name St. Benedict's thistle, which refers to the "patron saint of poison antidotes." It can be used as an emetic to expel poisons from the stomach. Cnicus *was also called holy or blessed thistle because it was so widely useful, especially in epidemic diseases—smallpox, chicken pox, and measles. It is a pungent bitter herb containing a wide array of constituents: bitter sesquiterpene lactones, flavonoids, phytosterols, tannins, volatile oils, lignan lactones, mucilage, and minerals (calcium, manganese, magnesium, and potassium).*

Blessed thistle has a strong affinity to the liver, like its cousin milk thistle. However, it is not sweet and oily like that herb, but bitter and pungent. Consequently, it is useful in chills alternating with fever, or "intermittent fever," which are particularly well treated by intense bitters such as cnicus that send a shiver through the system. Such chills, usually arising from influenza, malaria, or deep poisoning of the system, were associated with the liver and gallbladder in old-time Western medicine. This is because the chills run through the autonomic nervous system, which regulates the gallbladder and the digestive tract. The management of the bile is

upset, so the chills coincide with symptoms of biliousness, indigestion, bitter taste, gallstone concretion, and jaundice. *Cnicus* settles chills and biliousness, increases biliary secretion, and can remove gallstones.

Bilious symptoms may also arise from stress on the liver coming through poisons or toxins that are difficult for the liver to break down. *Cnicus* is a remedy for active hepatitis (cf. milk thistle). Poisons cause what the old doctors called "congestive chills," or deep chills and aching, sometimes with low-grade fever. I used *Cnicus* in a case of apparent hepatitis, where the complexion was moderately yellow, the woman was consumed by chills and fever, and the liver was painful and swollen. When she later went to get a blood test, no sign of hepatitis showed up, so we cannot be sure of the diagnosis. Still, it was an impressive cure.

In addition to acting on the liver, blessed thistle acts on all channels of elimination, making it a powerful blood purifier. This helps to explain its high reputation in the era of humoral medicine. It is a powerful diaphoretic that opens the skin to relieve fever and reset the healthy governance of the surface. By detoxifying the interior it reduces toxins that would be thrown to the surface in eruptive pox diseases. It also increases kidney function to remove edema and toxins. It is a pungent bitter carminative: small doses increase secretion from the GI tract, increasing saliva, stomach acid, pancreatic enzymes, and bile. Large doses act as an emetic to remove phlegm from the stomach and lungs. As a bitter remedy for intermittent fever, chills, fever, and toxic poisoning, it is analogous to *Eupatorium perfoliatum* (boneset).

In addition to the preceding properties blessed thistle acts on the veins. It is a "venous tonic when the venous drainage is obstructed from uterine, prostatic, or a congested pelvis" (Menzies-Trull, 2003, 549). It increases circulation to the brain, and is traditionally used to improve memory, poor concentration, headaches (especially those associated with the liver), and depression. The mild circulatory stimulation it exhibits assists the cleansing, detoxifying powers to cleanse the blood, lymph, and tissues. By its sanative and circulatory powers it cleans indolent, slowly healing, septic

infections, wounds, and ulcers. It contains antimicrobial and antiseptic constituents (the bitter sesquiterpene lactones cnicin and artemisiifolin).

Samuel Westcott Tilke, an important herbalist in London in the early nineteenth century, introduced blessed thistle as a female remedy for puberty, menstruation, menopause, pregnancy, and lactation (Webb, 1916, 248). In my experience, it is especially well suited to conditions associated with excess androgen, the hormone most difficult for the liver to detoxify. Hyperandrogenism is the most common hormonal disorder in women and is frequent in young women, resulting in ovarian cysts, acne, PMS, and blood sugar anomalies (cf. *Artemisia vulgaris, Marrubium, Lactuca, Lilium*). It is an extraordinarily reliable galactagogue (Terry Willard).

All of these uses, save for Tilke's gynecological additions, are found in the traditional literature. P. A. Matthioli informs us that blessed thistle "is a plant of great virtue; it helpeth inwardly and outwardly; it strengthens all the principal members of the body, as the brain, the heart, the stomach, the liver, the lungs and the kidney; it is also a preservative against all disease, for it causes perspiration, by which the body is purged of much corruption, such as breedeth diseases; it expelleth the venom of infection; it consumes and wastes away all bad humors; therefore, give God thanks for his goodness, Who hath given this herb and all others for the benefit of our health" (quoted by Maude Grieve, 1931, 796).

TASTE:

bitter, acrid, pungent

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Depression.

HEAD

- Poor circulation to the brain; reduced memory, inability to concentrate; senility.
- Dizziness, tinnitus.
- *Headaches associated with the liver and digestion; frontal*.

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory infection, weak lungs, colds, bronchial catarrh.

HEART

- Angina.

DIGESTION

- *Poor appetite, weak stomach, mucus in the stomach (canker), fermentation, indigestion, gas* (cold infusion; small doses).
- Cramps (warm infusion).
- Intestinal worms (powdered leaves).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- *Liver congestion and swelling, with flu-like, intermittent chills, yellowish complexion, jaundice; hepatitis*.

KIDNEYS

- Edema.

FEMALE

- *Puberty: hormonal regulation in young girls*.
- *Menstruation: cramps, pain, headaches associated with excess androgen*.
- Vaginal discharge.
- Menopause: headaches associated with hormonal imbalances.

- Pregnancy.
- *Lactation: one of the most reliable galactagogues*.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Tightens tendons, sinews, joints.
- Arthritis.

FEVER

- *Intermittent fever, chill/fever, malaria, influenza (cf*. Eupatorium perfoliatum*)*.

SKIN

- Festering sores, septic wounds, ulcers.
- Ringworm.
- Cancer.

OTHER

- Emetic.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Leaves, flowers, and seeds are all used. Large doses produce relatively painless emesis (hence its use to remove poisons taken at the mouth). Macerate 6 teaspoonfuls of the dried leaf in 1 pint of cold water; take 2 tablespoonfuls as an emetic and half a teaspoonful as a tonic (Cerney, 1976, 65). Cold infusions in smaller doses are tonic to the digestion, whereas hot draughts are diaphoretic in fever. Fluid extract and tincture are used.

John Quincy (1736, 111) writes in the London *Pharmacopoeia*, "Schrader observes somewhat very odd of it, *viz.*, that if it be gather'd in the middle or beginning of June, it is very efficacious in curing fresh wounds; but that it has no such virtue if gather'd at any other time."

CAUTIONS:

Allergic reaction possible.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–5, 7–10, 16–22), Samuel Westcott Tilke (1, 2, 3, 6, 12–15), Maude Grieve, Anita Ralph (4), Matthew Wood (8, 10, and 20-confirmed), Louise Tenney (8, 23), Christopher Menzies-Trull (3), Terry Willard (17-confirmed).

Commiphora spp. Myrrh.

The resinous secretions of a small desert tree in Arabia and the Horn of Africa, long used in Old World medicine. Recipes from Assyrian texts date to 1700 BCE. Myrrh gum (correctly called an "oleo-gum-resin") consists of oil soluble essential oils (about 5%), water soluble gum (about 60%, containing some carbohydrates and sugars), and a resin soluble in alcohol (about 35%). This means that the properties of myrrh gum can be altered by the method of extraction.

Myrrh gum is a strong stimulant and astringent that acts on the mucosa and skin. It is best known, from ancient times down to the present, as an external application in green wounds and putrefactive wounds. Samuel Thomson (1841) treats us to his own case. While breaking new land in Vermont, he cut a gash clean through his foot with an ax. His father, not knowing what to do, kept the wound open by putting a string through it (do not try this at home), put the boy on a sledge, and headed for the nearest doctor, several days away. Dr. Kitteridge was disgusted by the inept wound-treatment—the string caused the wound to putrefy and poisoned the blood. "Is he going to die?" asked the ashen father. "Of course he is," the old doctor retorted sharply. "But not from this wound." With myrrh powder the gash slowly healed.

For internal affections, myrrh is especially used for relaxed conditions of the mucosa and skin, to prevent hypersecretion and damp surfaces, and also in putrefaction. It is an important specific to cleanse rotten gums. The Assyrians used it to check excessive salivation and tonsillitis. Arab physicians recommended sucking on the little pieces of resin.

Myrrh gum is indicated by a pale, flabby, damp tongue. This symptom, with heaviness and indigestion, indicates relaxation of the gastrointestinal tract, with mucus in the stool; relaxation of the respiratory mucosa, with phlegm in the lungs; a full, congested feeling in the pelvis and clear vaginal discharge, reproductive relaxation, and so forth. Myrrh has long been used for a flaccid, relaxed condition of the muscles and mucosa of the womb. It is a "great Cleanser and Strengthner of the Womb," wrote John Quincy (1736).

Some of our best palliatives for diabetes mellitus type II are astringent stimulants because these agents cut down on the secretion of urine through the kidneys and stimulate cell life and therefore blood sugar and insulin uptake. Hence, myrrh gum is a specific for diabetes in the Middle East.

Samuel Thomson used myrrh gum as a specific for arthritis.

TASTE:

warm • stimulating • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

depression, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Endomorphic *(kapha)* constitutions with relaxation and depression; vascular enfeeblement, poor circulation to the

extremities, depressed cell life.
- Tongue pale, flabby, moist; mucosa pale, flabby, with profuse secretion.

RESPIRATION

- Catarrh of the nasal passages, throat, pharynx, and ears.
- Sore throat, tonsillitis, diphtheria.
- Free secretion and phlegm in the lungs.
- Chronic catarrh, "profound congestion" (Christopher).
- Cough.
- *Bronchitis*.
- Asthma.
- Tuberculosis.

DIGESTION

- *Bad breath; gum disease; canker sores; bleeding gums; wound in the mouth*.
- Atonic dyspepsia; indigestion, gas.
- Chronic, atonic diarrhea, dysentery, colitis.
- Mucus in the stools.
- Worms (powder in capsules).
- Pelvic engorgement, rectal fissure, hemorrhoids.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Mucus in urine.

FEMALE

- Vaginitis, yeast infection, leucorrhea, discharge.
- Menstrual derangements characterized by debility of the muscular fiber, "flaccidity of the womb," amenorrhea, uterine tumors, infertility.
- Parturition: deficient labor, helps pass the afterbirth following an exhausting labor.
- Menopause.
- Nipples, sore and abraded.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis.

SKIN AND EXTERNAL

- Eczema.
- Abrasions.
- *Skin and mucosa rotten, putrid, ulcerated, gangrenous (dissolved in water or wine)*.
- *Leg ulcers*.
- *Boils, wounds*, pimples, herpes.
- *Externally in tooth powders, mouthwashes, and gargles, and also as a mildly stimulating application to sluggish ulcers*.

FEVER

- Scarlet fever.

OTHER

- Adult onset diabetes.
- Hypothyroidism (uncertain medical evidence).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Used as a powder, or extracted in water, alcohol, or oil. Tincture of myrrh, 1–10 drops, internally or as a gargle.

CAUTIONS:

Long regarded as safe. The absolute essential oil can cause skin irritation.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, James Snow and James Green (1, 2), Martin Watt and Wanda Sellar (2–13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23–29, 32), John Christopher (6–9, 11–13, 18, 22, 25), Louise Tenney (6–12, 16, 18, 22–25, 28, 30), Matthew Wood (31-not confirmed), 7Song (20-confirmed).

Coriandrum sativum. Coriander, Cilantro.

Coriander seeds are one of the main flavoring agents in modern curry and chai mixes. They have long been used in Indian cooking. They have been used since the Middle Ages in the West, and are still used as a flavoring agent. Coriander leaf is known as cilantro, and has different uses.

The leaf (called cilantro) is cooling whereas the seed or fruit (coriander) is warming, giving the two parts of the plant opposite properties. Both are good general household remedies for simple problems in the digestive, respiratory, or urinary tracts. The fixed oil in the seed breaks down in the large intestine, so this plant has a stronger influence on that organ (Otto Masseurt). “It is claimed that it strengthens the muscles of the heart and the coronary system; certainly it corrects digestion” (Donald Law, 1973, 112). Cilantro is used as a “heavy metal detoxifier.”

TASTE:

(leaf) bitter, pungent, sour • cool
(fruit) bitter, pungent • warm • stimulating

TISSUE STATE:

(leaf) irritation
(fruit) depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Allergies, hay fever, sore throat (leaf).

DIGESTION

- Vomiting, indigestion (leaf).
- Putrefaction in stomach and intestines (seed).
- Acute or chronic indigestion (seed).
- Bloating, soreness, hiccoughs, belching, flatulence, and cramps (seed).
- Headache due to digestive trouble (seed).
- Chronic indigestion with debility (seed).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Cystitis, burning urethra (leaf).

SKIN

- Hot skin; urticaria, itch, rash, burns (leaf).

OTHER

- Heavy metal detoxification (leaf).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Fresh juice of cilantro. Seeds whole or ground. Cold infusion. “Allow for lengthy steeping of the seeds, to get the full flavour do not boil the seeds” (Donald Law, 1973, 112).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Vasant Lad and David Frawley (1–2, 8–9), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (3–7), Otto Masseurt.

Cornus officinalis. Cornel.

Cornel is a small tree native from Europe to China. It is not much used in the former area, but much in the latter. Henry Lu (1994, 134) explains the signature that led to the use of *Cornus* as a remedy for longevity and male sexual potency. The tree flowers in May (like our North American *Cornus florida*) but the fruit does not ripen until November. This suggested the idea of longevity through slow, steady development. *Cornus* thus came to be used, in combination with morinda bark, as one of the most important life extension tonics. It also developed a reputation as a remedy for male potency.

Cornus officinalis is a "yang tonic" that restores and retains important fluids. The fruit of the cornel is used. It is indicated for symptoms of kidney yang deficiency: loss of fluids, lower back pain, seminal emissions, dizziness, ringing in the ears, and insomnia. It is also indicated when a cold sweat results in exhaustion (Lu, 1994, 135).

Cornel would be considered an "elk medicine" in American Indian medicine, like its cousin, *Cornus florida*. That puts it in a class with staghorn sumach, Florida dogwood, and even the exotic lemon, all of which help retain fluids running too freely from the genitourinary tract. It is intensely sour and astringent (like sumach berry and lemon, both of which stop excess flux of urine and precious substances from the body). Like Florida dogwood, cornel acts on the liver and kidneys. Like staghorn sumach it restrains loss of perspiration and urination and stabilizes blood sugar.

I was visited by a woman in her mid-thirties who wanted to get pregnant with her new husband. She was dark under the eyes from adrenal exhaustion so I gave her Siberian ginseng, which cleared up the darkness and the exhaustion—an indication from William LeSassier. Next I saw her husband, who was suffering from exhaustion too, including sexual underactivity. The tongue was red, indicating some kind of fever, but he looked thin and weak. I gave him yarrow and cornel fruit. In two months' time the woman was pregnant (since delivered of a baby girl) and, she reported, her husband was much more lively in bed.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

For most conditions cornel is decocted in water, but for insomnia it is macerated in wine, 20 grams to 5 cups of wine (Lu, 1994, 135).

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Constipation.

LITERATURE:

Traditional Chinese medicine, Henry Lu, Dan Bensky and Andrew Gamble.

Crataegus oxyacantha, Crataegus sp. Hawthorn.

The hawthorns are small trees native throughout the northern hemisphere. They have a long history of use in Arabic medicine, but were little known in European medicine until recently. In 1895 hawthorn was introduced to the world as a heart tonic. This usage has continued down to the present, with verification from modern research, so that hawthorn is at present a very popular remedy in Europe. It contains flavonoids, procyanidins, and numerous acids. These constituents are cooling, or "antioxidant." More specifically, the flavonoid rutin is believed to act on the capillaries, reducing wear and tear—thus increasing the passage of blood and removing congestion associated with heat.

Hawthorn has been shown to lower unhealthy cholesterol and high blood pressure. It apparently does this by improving the deposition of lipids in the walls of the capillaries and in the red blood cells that are squeezed through them. This cuts down on the irritability of the capillaries, so that the blood passes more quickly and efficiently, thus reducing congestion and heat. Hawthorn has a normalizing effect on the cholesterols, probably decreasing high LDLs (bad

cholesterols) and increasing HDLs (the good ones). This causes more efficient patching on injured capillary surfaces. How do we know this? These are deductions I have made from the effect that hawthorn has on the capillaries and skin.

How does a person like myself observe the capillaries? If the meaty parts of the palm, especially near the wrist, are red this indicates capillary congestion of red blood cells. If these fatty tissues are depressed with a finger and this is followed by blanching (the area stays white for a few seconds), then the indication is that there is heat and irritation in the capillaries with friction between the walls of the vessels and the red blood cells, so that the latter cannot flow through as quickly. This is a keynote indication for hawthorn. (If this condition occurs but the skin color is yellow this is an indication for wild cherry bark.) In addition, I have also observed that when hawthorn is needed there will often be a certain dryness on the backs of the hands and wrists, or elsewhere. This indicates poor secretion from the sebaceous glands, but more deeply it indicates that the cell walls are probably short on lipids.

Hawthorn not only has an affinity for the capillaries and cholesterol, but an elective affinity for the coronary circulation. Some people can feel the increase of circulation to the heart. What is interesting about this is that the coronary arteries are the site for the most deposition of LDLs because they are made up of triglycerides and it is believed the heart prefers this source over glucose for its sugar. Thus, the coronary arteries have a tendency to build up the so-called “bad cholesterols.” Hawthorn probably normalizes this deposition to the right value. Irritable capillaries, backup of red blood cells, and LDL cholesterol deposition all favor high blood pressure, and hypertrophy of the heart, as it overbuilds itself to pump the blood against these increased pressures. The practitioner should not, however, look to high blood pressure as a specific indicator because many people needing hawthorn have low blood pressure. A better indication is the redness and blanching in the palm.

Rudolf Weiss (1988), fairly representative of modern German literature, describes *Crataegus* as a cardiac tonic, reducing the

likelihood of heart attack and relieving the subjective symptoms of discomfort in angina. It opens the coronary arteries and improves blood flow to the heart, strengthening the myocardium. Unlike digitalis, which directly strengthens the contractile movement of the cardiac muscles, *Crataegus* improves the nutrition, activity, energy reserves, and energy release of the heart muscle. Consequently, it has a beneficial effect in degenerative, age-related changes in structure. It is useful in cardiac arrhythmias. By opening the coronary circulation, *Crataegus* can antidote the effects of arteriosclerosis, lower high blood pressure, and increase the health of the heart muscle. The old eclectics add that *Crataegus* does not act on valvular disease—here they recommended cactus—but on the heart muscle.

Hawthorn also has a tonifying effect on the large vessels. My friend Jennifer Tucker, an herbalist in State College, Pennsylvania, passed on a beautiful case history. A woman came with her four- or five-month-old baby for flower essences. The baby, she explained, had a too small aorta and either was going to die or needed surgery, which it was unlikely to survive. She and her husband had chosen not to do the operation—the flower essences were for her to accept the eventual death of the little child. She didn't want to get her hopes up, but Jennifer got her to give the baby hawthorn. At the next check-up the doctor exclaimed, "What did you do to this baby?" The woman was frightened, but he quickly explained that the artery was now normal in size. Every once and a while, the mother brings the little boy by to visit "the herb lady."

By reducing heat *Crataegus* lessens restlessness, irritability, anxiety, and nervousness that sometimes accompany cardiac conditions. It has been cited as a remedy for attention deficit by David Winston—an indication confirmed in my own practice. This is something we often find when there is heat, which has an agitating effect. The child (or adult) runs around and has trouble settling down and focusing. By relaxing the nervous system and heart, irregular pulse and arrhythmias are overcome.

In recent years hawthorn has been cited as a remedy for autoimmune disease. This goes hand in hand with its prominence as

a remedy to fight heat and the excited tissue state, which is characterized by such overactivity. It reduces irritation of the skin, mucosa, and blood vessels. Deborah Francis, ND, has introduced it as an antihistamine to palliate the irritable mucosa in asthmatic cases while seeking a deeper, curative agent. I have not used hawthorn in this manner, but here is a case history from my practice showing how it worked in a bad case of childhood sinusitis. "We met you in July 2005 in Plum City by the trout pond," I was reminded by a Wisconsin mother. Her son Jeff "was three years old at the time and had been diagnosed with chronic sinusitis at the age of twenty-three months by the MDs, who wanted to do major sinus surgery on him." I was glad I saw the boy in person because I would not have guessed hawthorn by telephone. We both just happened to be in western Wisconsin right then. Jeff had the characteristic redness on the "cheeky" parts of the body—of which there are more on a three-year-old. We treated him with hawthorn (70%), elder (20%), and wild cherry (10%), the latter two reinforcing the former. "This seemed to work wonders on him, he was noticeably improved until he caught a cold earlier this summer [2006]. He didn't get sinus infection this time, but his head is congested again and his breathing is very noisy at night and he is not getting a good night's sleep again. He is once again waking up with bags under his eyes. His sleep apnea had stopped and he was waking up well rested when he was taking the tincture." We sent off more, which again brought him back to normal.

Hawthorn reduces irritation and redness of the skin, and increases the ability of the skin to form a healthy scab. I remember one case in which a dose simply changed a small, red, irritable patch of skin into a scab in a few minutes. This reminded me of a tip passed on to me by an American Indian medicine woman, years before. She said, "There's something in the thorn that causes the skin not to heal when it is pricked. But if you pick that thorn and prick a boil it will empty out and heal up."

The story of hawthorn should probably begin with the digestion of lipids, rather than their usage. In traditional Chinese medicine *Crataegus* is used for sluggish digestion, especially of meat. As

recently as the Renaissance, it was customary in Europe to use hawthorn berries with meat to make it more digestible. Hawthorn probably acts on the cells of the gut, through which digested lipids have to pass, since the digestate goes through cell walls, not between the cells. If the cell walls of the gut are slightly dry and lacking in their full measure of fats, it stands to reason they will not assimilate lipids as well.

Recently I gave *Crataegus* berry tincture to a four-year-old girl who had been badly damaged by a vaccine in infancy. She became autistic and her guts became riddled with sores and bacteria. I was led to this remedy by a slight "blanching" response in the capillaries of the hand, the preponderance of intense heat symptoms through the GI, the use of hawthorn as a specific for attention deficit (thank-you, David Winston), and by the folklore associating hawthorn with the fairies. It was not evident to either the mother or me that it was a particularly important part of the treatment strategy and it took some time to differentiate its effect from that of other remedies given. However, after two months it became clear to the mother that the hawthorn had a marked effect, so far promoting speech, attention, and interaction as to be remarkable. "I give a dose of one drop," she related, "and within an hour she is speaking in sentences, abstract concepts, and correct tenses." Normally she sort of mumbles to herself. However, "She gets completely constipated from one drop." The mother believed that the hawthorn precipitated the mercury from the vaccine out of the tissues into the bloodstream, causing a die off of bowel flora. I suggested a fractional dose—a sip of a glass of water with one drop in it. I give this unfinished case as the book goes to press because of the radical improvement in this serious condition (autism), hoping that it may help others.

TASTE:

(berries) sweet, sour • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, atrophy, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *If the skin of the palms or fingers is red, press and watch for blanching (the area under pressure remains white for longer than normal)*.
- Red cheeks.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Attention deficit in children and adults; can't focus, can't sit down and read; restless, irritable, nervous*.
- Insomnia.

RESPIRATION

- Allergies; sinusitis, colds, bronchitis, asthma—curative or palliative.

HEART AND CIRCULATION

- Senile heart, patients with degenerative changes of the cardiac muscle, or with coronary artery disease; anginal symptoms.
- *Hypertension; opens the coronary circulation and may reduce arteriosclerotic effects, if not the actual deposits*.
- Cardiac arrhythmias, mainly extra systoles and acute tachycardia attacks.
- Weakness of the myocardium and heart problems after fevers, influenza, pneumonia, scarlet fever, acute arthritic attacks, etc.
- Excessive perspiration following acute illness, with weakness of the heart.
- Gray pallor of incipient heart attack.
- Pulse rapid, irregular, intermittent, and small; a dose noticeably calms the pulse.

DIGESTION

- Indigestion; food sits in the stomach, ferments, and causes heartburn; indigestion, constipation, atonic lower intestine.
- Nervous stomach.

LIVER

- Liver; symptoms not well developed.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Dropsy, stones in the kidneys.

SKIN

- *Skin red, dry, irritated; especially on the backs of the hands, wrists, and up the forearms;* if it is the right remedy crataegus will bring oil into the area in less than 15 minutes from the first dose.

OTHER

- Worse from excitement, exertion, and in a warm room; better from fresh air, quiet, and rest; great exhaustion from the slightest mental or physical movement.
- *Allergies, food allergies*.
- Redness under the nostrils, in severe cases down to the mouth.
- Poultice of the leaves or berries to draw out embedded thorns, splinters, felons, and whitlows.
- Thorn to break infected boil open.
- Hypoglycemia.
- *Low blood pressure*.
- Inflammatory rheumatism.
- Sore throat.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The berries were the part traditionally used. I don't think there is a more beautiful flavor than tincture of hawthorn berry prepared in

brandy. Pharmaceutical companies experimented with the use of the flowers and leaves, but they are not superior to the berries. Moderate to large doses are most beneficial. Twenty drops of the tincture, diluted with water, on rising and going to bed; treatment is long term (Weiss, 1988, 165).

CAUTIONS:

"If it should cause nausea or fullness in the head then dose should be reduced" (Petersen, 1905, 79). This represents a homeopathic "proving," since these are symptoms it cures.

LITERATURE:

Finley Ellingwood (6–10, 15, 18), John William Fyfe (6–10,12), William Boericke (12, 18), Cyril Boger (12), Rudolf Weiss (6–10), Brent Davis (11), Chalid Ottway (16, 21), David Winston (3), traditional Chinese medicine (13), Matthew Wood (1, 3-confirmed, 5-confirmed, 11, 14, 17, 18-confirmed, 19, 20, 24-confirmed), Matthew Becker (2), Louise Tenney (4, 21–26), Deborah Francis (5), traditional Native American (22).

Crocus sativus. Saffron.

This beautiful spring flower is native to Europe and Asia, but is grown widely as an ornamental. It is also cultivated for the stigmas, which are picked and used as a flavoring and coloring agent in cooking. They command a high price. Saffron contains a volatile oil (picrocrocin or saffron bitter), gum, wax, fat, albumin.

Saffron has long been used in domestic and professional medicine in Europe. The aromatic, bitter taste (Grieve) reveals that it is a stimulant and carminative. The fact that it is a warming remedy is

reinforced by the growth habit, since it grows almost before the snow is off the ground. The oiliness of the bulb provides the plant with real insulation. As a warming stimulant crocus is used when the blood is congealed and clotted, in old bruises and menstrual difficulties, and when cancer develops from such blood. It also helps to bring the "bad blood" out of the system in eruptive fevers, where it brings the rash to the surface. "In our rural districts there is a popular custom of giving saffron tea in measles, on the doctrine of colour analogy" (Fernie, 1914, 456). The dangers of eruptive fevers are magnified by filth in the blood, which tends to internalize the fever, resulting in prolongation of the fever and damage to the internal organs.

The ability of *Crocus* to detoxify led to it being associated with crocodiles ("crocus-fearers") and alligators, which feed on dead carcasses.

The hot tea has long been used in the early stages of eruptive diseases, particularly measles and scarlet fever. Dr. Finley Ellingwood (1918, 271) notes that "Saffron tea was long in good repute among the grandmothers" of the early nineteenth century "as an essential remedy to start newborn babes in normal health channels. It was thought necessary to encourage the action of the liver and to cleanse the intestinal canal and stomach. It was positively indicated, if the skin was yellow and in infantile colic."

Saffron has a long history of use in professional medicine as a menstrual remedy, especially "when the blood is black, viscid, clotting, forming itself into long black strings" (Clarke, 1900, 607). "Boerhaave said that saffron possesses the power of liquefying the blood" (Fernie, 1914, 448).

The eclectic, J. W. Fyfe (1909, 493), gives an account rich in menstrual symptoms. "Crocus has a specific action on the uterus, and in amenorrhea, as well as in profuse bleeding, it exerts a corrective influence. In menorrhagia, especially when the discharge is clotted, it modifies the pain and restores normal menstruation, and in suppression of the lochia it is deemed useful. In chronic loss of blood from the uterus it is also said to be an efficient remedy." Such excessively congealed blood indicates the need for a warming

stimulant. It is also used on old bruises in an “indolent” phase, when healing will not set in, and on tumors (which often develop from badly congealed blood and bruises).

Crocus received a homeopathic proving that justified most of the traditional uses. It also brought distinctive mental symptoms, with alternation between violent rage and repentance, or laughter and tears, and as if between inebriation and sobriety. Clarke gives some case histories. “I once cured with a few doses of *Crocus* a young artist who had become subject to violent outbursts of rage in which he would take up a knife to throw at his mother, with whom he lived, and almost immediately after would be abjectly repentant. The household was on the point of being broken up when the trouble was completely removed by *Crocus*.” On another occasion, “in hospital, I happened to see a young girl who was really desperately ill with heart failure and valvular disease, in a fit of hysterical laughter. This made me think of *Crocus*.” The 30x homeopathic potency restored her to mental and physical health. This sort of instability of the emotional life is associated with the heart in traditional Chinese medicine—“heart not storing the shen.”

There are many associations between *Crocus* and the heart in English folk medicine. A popular name is Heart of Man *(Cor hominis)* or Philosopher’s Gold *(Aurum philosophorum)*. Sir Francis Bacon is supposed to have written, “Saffron conveys medicine to the heart, cures its palpitation, removes melancholy and uneasiness, revives the brain, renders the mind cheerful, and generates boldness.” The syrup is a “slightly stimulating exhilarant” (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 447).

TASTE:

sweet, pungent • aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy, constriction

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Inequality of the complexion; pallor alternating with redness; pulsating on one side of the face.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Great alternation of moods; violent rage and repentance, happiness and sadness, laughter and tears, exhilaration and despondency.

HEAD

- Headache; especially in the forehead; vertigo.
- Tongue; prominent papillae.

RESPIRATION

- Cough, violent, dry, shaking (cf. *Verbascum*); bronchitis.
- Expectoration of blood; tuberculosis.

DIGESTION

- Stomach much disordered; heartburn, risings, qualmishness, nausea, bloating.
- Colic and flatulence.
- Distention of the stomach and abdomen.
- Hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia.
- Infantile jaundice and colic.

CARDIOVASCULAR AND BLOOD

- Coagulation of the blood leading to heart disease.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Water retention.
- Kidney stones.

FEMALE

- Menstruation: amenorrhea.
- Menstruation: pains in the lumbar region accompany.
- Menstruation: congestive dysmenorrhea, discharge dark and stringy.
- Uterine hemorrhage; blood dark and tarry; clotted and in strings.
- Pregnancy: excessive fetal movement.
- Pregnancy: sleeplessness and pain.
- Postpartum: suppression of the lochial discharge.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Rheumatism*, arthritis.
- Back, coldness, heaviness, soreness, bruised feeling.

SKIN

- Psoriasis.
- Chafes, scalds, cuts, wounds, itch, bleeding.
- Emollient; softens hard lumps and knots.
- Boils, opens and heals.
- Aches, pains, exhaustion (bath).

FEVER

- *Stimulating diaphoretic given in the early stages of eruptive fever, to bring out the rash.*
- *Scarlet fever, measles*.
- Tonsillitis.

OTHER

- Palpitation of the heart (circumstances not defined).

PREPARATION, CAUTIONS, AND DOSAGE:

Large doses are uneconomical and can excite a homeopathic proving. “Excessive use of saffron proves harmful. It will produce an

intense pain in the head, and imperil the reason. Half a scruple, that is, ten grains, should be the largest dose. In full doses this tincture will provoke a determination of blood to the head, with bleeding from the nose, and sometimes with a disposition to immoderate laughter. Small doses, therefore, of the diluted tincture, ought to relieve these symptoms when they occur as spontaneous illness" (Fernie, 1914, 449).

Tincture of the stigmas, 5–15 drops (Maude Grieve, 1931, 700). The homeopathic preparations have the same application as the herbal.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Henry Clarke (homeopathic and traditional; 1–7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 21), Maude Grieve (24), John William Fyfe (8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19), Finley Ellingwood (11, 13, 23), W. T. Fernie (2, 18), Louise Tenney (8, 10, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30), Chalid Ottway (3, 14, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32).

Cucurbita citrullus, Citrullus lanatus, Citrullus vulgaris. Watermelon Seed.

Watermelon is one of the "four greater cold seeds" of Greek medicine. It was brought to the New World at an early date. One of my ancestors received a land grant for twenty acres on "watermilyn hill" in Hempstead, Long Island, in 1664. By this time the Spanish had already introduced it to the Southwestern Indians, who thus gained an important food and medicine.

The genus name Citrullus *is correct today, but I have retained the old* Cucurbita *in order to allow comparison between different members of the melon family.*

Watermelon is one of the most accessible remedies for heat and irritation of the kidneys. It is commonly eaten on hot summer days

for its thirst-quenching, cooling effect. It cools partly by opening up the kidneys. The flesh is good in season, the dried seeds at other times. It is a cooling, sedative diuretic containing fruit sugars and acids.

The association of watermelon and the kidneys is quite ancient. Moses Maimonides learned to use cooked melon seeds to prevent kidney stones from Abu Merwan Ibn Zuhr. “He was one of the [great] experimentalists. His son related to me astounding things regarding his father and the latter’s travail and diligence in experimentation. I, therefore, see fit to mention them in his name” (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:347). The affinity to the kidney is justified in another fashion by herbalist Julia Graves. “Cut a cucurbit crosswise and we have a semblance to the histological cut of the glomeruli,” she notes. John Hill (1740, 307) recommends “all the cold seeds in stranguries and heat of urine.”

“It seems as though it was only at yesterday’s meal that Grandfather warned us not to throw away the innumerable seeds,” writes New England herbalist and pharmacist Ben Charles Harris (1968, 166). “We were rewarded by having Grandfather relate to us some fable or bit of folklore pertaining to the herbs of our immediate neighborhood.” Harris gives precise directions. “Dip them via a metal strainer in a mild solution of cold soapy water. The seeds dry best if first they are rolled in a towel to absorb most of the moisture. To dry completely they are spread out on large sheets of cardboard.” The late Georgia herbalist Tommie Bass (Crellin and Philpott, 1990, II:450) said of the seed, “Old ladies and old men buy them by the pound” as a diuretic.

Dr. Finley Ellingwood (1918, 439) gives a short, neat account of this remedy. “The juice of the fruit is a diuretic with many individuals, producing a cooling sense of relief from heat or aching across the kidneys, or throughout the urinary apparatus. The seeds in the form of an infusion act promptly. In those conditions accompanied with a general sense of constriction, or backache from the passage of urates and phosphatic gravel, this remedy exercises a direct soothing influence, not only upon the renal organs, but upon the bladder, especially when the irritation persists, warding off

subsequent inflammation. It is also very useful during the active stage of cystitis."

Like some of the other remedies for heat and irritation of the kidneys, watermelon lowers high blood pressure. This fact is brought to our attention by Harris (1968, 166). "High blood pressure … has been helped to a marked degree by drinking teas of Watermelon seeds." He points out the mechanism of action. "An extract of watermelon seeds contains an active ingredient called Cucurbocitrin which has been of great value in dilating the capillaries or very small blood vessels. By directing its benefits toward the kidney organs, the pressure upon the large blood vessels is reduced." He quotes an old newspaper clipping in which a case of nephritis in an eight-year-old boy was kept at bay by watermelon seed tea.

The Southwestern Indians learned how to make syrup from watermelon flesh. This was used for food and medicine. Various anthropological and first person accounts were collected by John Heinerman (1994, 265–7). The syrup is a tonic nutritive for old people and convalescents. It cools fevers and strengthens and cools the lungs and gastrointestinal tract. One old wise woman recommended it for sour stomach caused by "eating too much of the white man's food." Heinerman adds that watermelon is beneficial for arthritis and gout, also for skin problems, all of which may be due to a too-acid blood from improper eating. Cherokee herbalist Sondra Boyd notes that it eliminates poisons and toxins. Herbalist Kathleen Maier recommends watermelon seeds in food poisoning with vomiting and diarrhea. Watermelon binds the stool but loosens the kidneys.

TASTE:

(fruit) sweet, cold, moist

TISSUE STATE:

excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Vexation, irritability.
- Thirst, summer heat, sunstroke, fever.

DIGESTION

- Canker sores, bleeding gums, sour stomach, diarrhea, food poisoning.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Heat and congestion across the lower back, in the region of the kidneys.
- Irritation and constriction from gravel in the kidneys and bladder.
- Burning urine, active stage of cystitis.
- High blood pressure from congested, hot kidneys.
- Nephritis.
- Urination painful and scanty in infants.
- Edema; as a diuretic in old age.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, gout.

SKIN

- Burning pains; skin problems, acne and rash.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The “infusion is preferable to alcoholic preparations” (Petersen, 1905, 79).

CAUTIONS:

The flesh and seeds are both regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Kathleen Maier (3), Finley Ellingwood (4–6), John Hill (6), Ben Charles Harris (7, 8), Frederick Petersen (9), Tommie Bass (10), John Heinerman (11, 12).

Cucurbita pepo. Pumpkin.

Pumpkin was one of the “four greater cold seeds” of Greek medicine, classified as cold and moist. However, it was not as important as watermelon and cucumber, also in this group. Today the seed is valued more for its fat and protein, which are nutritious, contain high amounts of zinc (deficient in the modern diet), and act on the prostate. In the nineteenth century the seeds were more famous as an anthelmintic to get rid of tapeworm. A protein, cucurbitan, is responsible for this action. It anesthetizes the worm, which is then removed with a gentle purgative. Results are variable, probably due to the uncertain concentration of this constituent in the seed (John Crellin and Jane Philpott, 1990, II:361). This is a case where, if there were enough need for it, a standardized extract would be beneficial. Pumpkin flesh is 95% water (cool and moist indeed), so less active medicinally.

Pumpkin seed is sweet, moist, and nutritive. As we have seen, it was one of the "four greater cold seeds" of Greek medicine, classified as cold and moist. It is very high in vitamins and minerals, especially zinc. Because this mineral is an important constituent of sperm, it has been used for some time as a "male tonic." Because zinc is absorbed through the mouth and gums pumpkin seed should be chewed very well. The seeds are beneficial for prostate problems and a weak, irritable, or nervous bladder (Otto Wolff, 1991, 88–89). Dr. J. V. Cerney (1976, 73) goes so far as to cite them "for all *urinary problems* (spasm, scalding urine, etc.)."

Pumpkins were associated with the diet of the poor, both in England and America. "The poor people mix the fleshy part of the fruit with apples, and bake them in pies," notes Sir John Hill (1740, 307). I guess those poor people came over to America, where pumpkin and apple pie is everyone's favorite. Tommie Bass (Crellin and Philpott, 1990, II:360) noted that pumpkins were a staple of share croppers in the old South, and were excellent for "bad digestion." The seeds are "the finest thing in the world for the prostate gland" and are diuretic (like watermelon seed, but less so) for the kidneys.

Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (1991, 124) classify pumpkin flesh as cooling and moistening, which follows the traditional designation for the seed. They recommend it for dryness in the stomach causing gas, bloating, and flatulence, burning, acidity, and hot flashes, worse from eating hot, spicy food. It has an action on hot flashes and night sweats—this suggests an hormonal and female use to supplement the male use. They also recommend pumpkin in chronic gastric flu, with upset stomach and fever, and in gastrointestinal complaints such as ulcer, gastritis, and ulcerative colitis. Also for heat and dryness causing spasms, irritation, and inflammation of the respiratory tract.

TASTE:

sweet • cool, moist

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Heat and drying in the respiratory tract, causing spasms, irritation, inflammation (flesh).

DIGESTION

- Dry stomach; gas, bloating, burning, acidity, and hot flashes, worse from hot, spicy food (flesh).
- Gastric flu, upset stomach, and fever (flesh).
- Ulcer, ulcerative colitis (flesh).
- Tapeworm (seed; traditional).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Weak, irritable, nervous bladder.
- Straining and scalding urine (cf. watermelon seed).
- Scanty urine (cf. watermelon seed).

MALE

- Prostate problems (fresh seed).

FEMALE

- Hot flashes and night sweats (flesh).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The fresh seeds are usually recommended. Pumpkin seed oil can also be used.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Hill, Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli, Leonard Thresher (3, 7), J. V. Cerney, Otto Wolff.

Cucurbita sativus. Cucumber.

Cucumber was one of the "four greater cold seeds" of Greek medicine. It was classified as cool and moist in the second degree. It is used in Western, Middle Eastern, and Ayurvedic herbalism. It appears to have properties similar to watermelon seed, another of the "greater cold seeds."

Cucumbers "are excellent good for hot stomachs and livers," writes Nicholas Culpeper (1653). "The juice of cucumbers, the face being washed with it, cleanseth the skin, and is excellent good for hot rheums in the eyes; the seed is excellent to provoke urine, and cleanse the passages thereof when they are stopped; neither do I think there is a better remedy for ulcers in the bladder than cucumbers; the usual course is to use the seeds in emulsions, as they make almond milk; but a better way by far (in my opinion), is this: when the season of the year is, take the cucumbers, and bruise them well, and distill the water from them, and let such as are trouble with ulcers in the bladders drink no other drink. The face being washed with the same water, be it never so red, will be benefited by it, and the complexion very much improved. It is also excellent good for sun-burning, freckles, and morphew."

R. Swinburne Clymer gives an account of cucumber as a universal remedy. "It is questionable whether any other agent, either vegetable or fruit, is as cleansing as the cucumber. It is ideal for the entire system. Cucumbers should be eaten only with a small amount of salt and possibly lemon juice, and only as a fruit between meals. During fever stages, when a cooling, cleansing agent is desired, it should be run through a vegetable press, the juice then pressed out and given in teaspoonful or tablespoonful doses as one would a medicine. Its action … is on every organ of the body. It might well

be termed a universal medicine" (Clymer, 1933, I:41). Bernard Jensen (1979, 149) also comments on the blood-purifying properties of cucumber. "They get rid of pus in the form of rashes, boils, pimples, and carbuncles."

TASTE:

sweet • cool, moist • slightly astringent

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- Heat and discharges from the eyes.
- Redness of the face; sunburn.
- Thirsty in the summer (cf. watermelon seed).

RESPIRATION

- Mucus and heat in the lungs.

DIGESTION

- Stomach and spleen disorders; heat in the stomach (not well described).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Water retention.
- Kidney stones.
- Urinary tract infections, difficult or scanty urine.
- Ulcerations in the bladder.

FEMALE

- Fissures of the nipples (ointment from cucumber flesh).

SKIN

- Acne, boils, carbuncles, rashes.

FEVER

- Fever.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Used fresh as a vegetable or juice. Tirtha recommends cucumber eaten raw with lemon juice, pepper, and salt, which is quite similar to Clymer.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Nicholas Culpeper (1, 2), Swami Sada Shiva Tirtha (3, 4, 5, 7), Hakim Chishti (6, 9), R. Swinburne Clymer (11, 12), Bernard Jensen (11).

Curcuma longa. Turmeric.

Turmeric is a spice native to the Spice Islands, long used in Chinese and Indian cooking and medicine. It has long been used in Western herbalism, but has enjoyed a renaissance in recent decades. It contains curcuminoids (antineoplastic, cholagogue, antioxidant), fixed oils, volatile oils, vitamin C, potassium, and sesquiterpene ketones.

Curcuma is a stimulant with an affinity to the liver, gallbladder, and digestive tract. As a stimulant to the liver it acts on both the catabolic side, to “purify the blood,” and on the anabolic, to create more bile. It is also thought to rebuild damaged hepatic tissue. By increasing the output of bile it promotes gallbladder function, clears intermittent heat and chills, fullness, constriction, heat and pain in the gallbladder region, and jaundice. While increasing bile production it also stimulates digestive secretions and is used as a carminative (like ginger and galangal).

By stimulating liver function and increasing the circulation to the periphery, turmeric is used to remove skin conditions associated with impure blood, coagulated blood, and depressed circulation. It also is used to remove gallstones, exciting contraction of the gallbladder. Samuel Henry (1814, 290) gives the following recipe. “Let the patient take near a teas-spoonful of the powder of turmeric root in half a pint of warm ale, with a small piece of fresh butter, about the size of a walnut, melted in it, shake the vessel well, and let him drink it as warm as he can bear, and soak his feet in warm water for fifteen minutes before going to bed, which will give him immediate relief. A certain gentleman, by making use of the above medicine, was relieved of his pains and voided a large quantity of gravel by stool, which was the means of restoring him to perfect health.”

Turmeric has an effect on the uterus that is quite strong, causing contractions for several hours. By stimulating the general circulation and uterine contraction it removes coagulated blood and promotes the menses. Samuel Henry gives the following directions. “For promoting the menses, pour a quart of boiling water on a tablespoonful of the powdered turmeric root, and let the patient take, for a few days before the full or change of the moon [or perhaps the beginning of the menses?], a teacup full twice a day, in the morning and when going to bed, sitting every night over the warm steam of catnip, pennyroyal, &c.”

TASTE:

(rhizome) pungent, bitter • warm • stimulating
(tuber) bitter, pungent • cool • stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

depression, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- Headache.
- Conjunctivitis.
- Toothache.

RESPIRATION

- Bronchitis.

DIGESTION

- Gastritis, heartburn, ulcers, nausea, vomiting.

LIVER

- Hepatitis, viral.
- Fullness, constriction, heat, and pain in the gallbladder region and jaundice.

FEMALE

- Uterine inertia, heavy, clotted blood during the period; delayed labor (cf. *Zingiber*); contraindicated earlier in pregnancy.

SKIN

- Scorpion bites, bruises with poor peripheral circulation, putrid ulcers and rashes that need to be brought to the surface.

FEVER

- Intermittent heat and chills.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The usual dosage is 1 teaspoonful of the power blended in water or juice, or 1–1 1/2 teaspoonfuls of the tincture, 3–4x/day.

CAUTIONS:

Turmeric is contraindicated in hyperacidity and ulcers from heat and irritation but is indicated in external or internal ulcers from putrefaction and depression. It should not be given in high doses to patients on blood thinners. It is also contraindicated during pregnancy.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, William LeSassier.

Cymbopogon citratus. Lemon Grass.

Lemon grass is native to India, but widely cultivated in the tropics. It has long been used in Indian cooking and medicine. In the last century it has been adopted into Western herbalism and aromatherapy. It contains volatile oils, including citral (70–85%). All grasses contain high amounts of silica, which help the sheaths that keep their upright structure. Hence, they are medicinal for weakness of the connective tissue (cf. oatseed, couchgrass). Lemon grass also contains highly soluble vitamins A and D.

Lemon grass is sour, cooling, and astringent. Therefore, it combats heat and tightens tissues of the body. It acts particularly on the connective tissue, where structural and immune functions meet.

Gümbel (1993, 202) gives an excellent account, based on the use of lemon grass oil. He calls it “the connective tissue oil.” It strengthens the elastin fibers in the middle layer of the skin. This is the layer that has both structural and immune functions. Hence, it is beneficial in weaknesses of the connective tissue of the skin. He uses it in atrophic and “reticulated” skin, where the dermis is no longer able to swell and bind with water. He considers it a subcutaneous tightener. It also tightens breast tissue (cf. *Alchemilla*).

The connective tissue of the skin is also important for its immune function. It is here that immune cells react against external pathogens that are making their way into the body when the

environment of the periphery is off. Lemon grass acts on the lymphatic capillaries and vessels draining away from the skin so it is useful in edema and lymphatic congestion, also clearing the periphery and making it less hospitable to foreign bugs. However, lemon grass also goes deeper into the lymphatic and immune system.

Gümbel writes that it acts on the spleen in a number of different ways. It increases the power of the spleen to destroy degraded red blood cells, it contracts smooth muscles of the spleen and intestines and activates peristalsis of intestines and lymphatic immune functions in the mucosa, glands, appendix, and so forth, and it acts on the pulpy connective tissue of the spleen, where blood gets into very close contact with lymphocytes, which comb the blood for impurities and carry out breakdown and removal of old red blood cells. It contracts the blood vessels generally. Going deeper into the inner workings of the immune system, lemon grass supports the function of the thymus gland.

Lemon grass is useful for sports injuries, sprains, internal bleeding, bruises, and dislocations. The oil is antiseptic, bactericidal, and antitoxic, because it stimulates oxidation and catabolism. In India it is used in cholera.

TASTE:

sour • cooling • astringent

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Gastrointestinal spasm; colic, gas.
- Diarrhea.
- Lumbago (external in coconut oil).
- Kidneys.
- Dysmenorrhea, neuralgic.
- Rheumatism, neuralgia.
- Sprains, pains.

- Fever.
- Colds.
- Ringworm.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Diluted oil; concentrated oil causes burning of the skin.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Swami Sada Shiva Tirtha (Ayurveda), Dietrich Gümbel (aromatherapy), Hilde Hemmes.

Cynara scolymus. Artichoke.

Artichoke is a large thistle, and like most members of that distinguished group, it has affinities for the liver, gallbladder, and kidneys. It is popular in modern European medicine as a remedy for indigestion and congestion of the liver and gallbladder. Cynara contains flavonoids, bitter principles, tannins, polyphenolic derivatives, mineral salts (zinc, nickel, cobalt, manganese, and selenium), and enzymes.

I have not used artichoke, so my friend Julia Graves, a European practitioner, volunteered an account. "Artichoke is cooling, a cholagogue of the first rank, moistening, a digestive bitter, and also contains quite a bit of inulin (this in the edible bud). The leaves are nauseatingly bitter, to the extent that they aggravate *vata* (dryness). This might depend on when picked. The chokes are slightly to moderately bitter, slightly sweet, and release *vata* and *pitta* (dryness and heat) from the gallbladder. The leaves probably do, too, but they are too bitter for me to try.

"The chokes moisten the gallbladder, that is, increase the fluidity of the bile, and thus help it release, along with any thickened bile,

definitely cooling the gallbladder, removing heat. I find artichoke cooling only to the gallbladder." By moistening the tract and increasing the fluidity of the bile, artichoke relaxes and decongests the gallbladder, but not "in the way of a nervine"—that is, through relaxation of the nervous system. Rather, "in the way of removing irritation (*pitta* at home base). It feels as if it unplugs the common gall duct by remoistening the mucosa and increasing the fluidity of the bile itself. This is distinctly different from slippery elm, which remoistens the mucosa, but does not increase or liquefy the bile, nor cool the area.

"I read elsewhere (e.g., Richo Cech) that it is hepatoprotective and helps digest fats and increases the rate of sugar metabolism, thus indicated in overweight people. I do not feel that I lost weight when I ate one huge organic choke a day for eight days in a row as a cure. But then, I am not overweight.

"The signature is obvious: the cooking water turns gall green—actually blue sometimes, and the leaves are the most hydro-active I have ever seen—once powder dry, they will turn all moist and flexible again once the air moisture goes up. I have not yet seen this in any other herb.

"Jacque and I found that it reduces appetite, and does what we call *windtreibend* in Germany: it pushes flatulence down along the guts, forcing it to leave the body. It also increases the amounts we pee.

"On the mental level, it unplugs old, smouldering resentment, suppressed anger, or affects of shock with anger, moving the mind to a new level. I forgot what Jacque said he felt, but I felt almost sick after the first choke, as if something was sweeping out my gallbladder whether I liked it or not, and (I had had it for dinner) making me very alert and awake, unable to sleep. I found myself at the computer, writing a very long letter I had put off to write for about four years, when my God daughter had asked me to write down for her 'how the story with my ex-boyfriend ended.' I had had great aversion to writing this, still feeling resentful and unable to let go since unable to resolve. It just all poured out of me, an artichoke was washing out my gallbladder, and I found myself able to write

everything clearly, objectively (yet not cold and distanced), and in doing so, letting it all go once and for all. As I dropped the letter in the mail box the next morning, I felt relieved of a huge burden. Artichoke cured me of my ex-boyfriend? Now, just three weeks later, I cannot remember anymore how crushed I still felt under the burden of the memories, and how I felt as if maybe I would never be able to resolve these feelings in this life. I told people I'd pay a fortune to never ever run into him in this lifetime again.

"This is why I am so impressed with artichoke, one of the most striking, bold, and incredibly beautiful members of the courageous thistle clan. It makes you strong and bold. As the Chinese say: the gallbladder is for courage."

John Hill (1740, 65) comments, "I have known it alone cure a jaundice." In traditional and European medicine, artichoke is used to remove gallstones and jaundice, increase digestion of fatty meals, decrease unhealthy cholesterol buildup and blood fats, reduce weight, decrease blood sugar levels, control arteriosclerosis and high blood pressure, calm the thyroid, and clear calcium and uric acid through the kidneys.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Hill recommends the root; today the leaves are used. "Harvest the leaves before flowering, drink an infusion before meals, two or three cups a day. Eating the choke alone without other food as a meal, perhaps with a bit of cold pressed organic olive oil is the most medicinally active way of eating it. The warmth of the cooked choke makes it better for *vata* people" (Julia Graves).

Daucus carota. Queen Anne's Lace, Wild Carrot.

Wild carrot or Queen Anne's lace is native to Europe but widely naturalized in North America. It is the wild ancestor of the domesticated carrot, but has much more active volatile oils and therefore a medicinally different profile. Domestic carrot is largely used as a cooling poultice.

Wild carrot has complex powers. It contains flavonoids, tannins, volatile oils, and an alkaloid (daucine).

Queen Anne's lace is ranked among the "irritating diuretics," due to a high content of stimulating volatile oils that pass off through the kidneys (cf. juniper). The oils also stimulate the mucosa of the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts. It is probably partly due to its irritating qualities that it is an abortifacient. However, many members of the carrot family have this attribute (even celery). Therefore, a deeper influence through the hormonal system is likely at work here. Dr. John Christopher (1996, 84) considered wild carrot to be a "pituitary stimulant" and used it as the basis of his pituitary formula. Wild carrot would therefore seem to act down the endocrine cascade, on the thyroid, kidneys, and sex hormones. It removes water weight by stimulating the kidneys and melts away fat by stimulating thyroid output. It controls diabetes in appropriate cases. It influences the mineral content of the urine, hence it is a traditional remedy for gout and arthritis. It has been used to regulate fertility.

Many testify to the powerful diuretic effect of daucus. Dr. John Eberle (1834, 2:318) writes, "In my own practice I have derived the most unequivocal advantage from an infusion of these seeds in anasarcous swellings of the lower extremities. They have also been employed with success in the other varieties of dropsy," sometimes including hydrothorax (water on the chest). "They hardly ever fail to produce a pretty copious diuresis."

"For dropsy and all obstructions of the kidneys," writes Derbyshire herbalist George Slack (1919, 120). "The author has cured a good many cases of pain in the back with an infusion of the wild carrot. One middle-aged female had a severe pain in her back, and made very little urine. She had tried many remedies, but to no avail. He made her a strong infusion of the herb, which she drank freely, and received immediate relief. In one week the pain was gone, and she was quite well. Those who suffer from pain in the back would do well to try it."

The late north Georgia herbalist Tommie Bass used wild carrot seed for water retention in the belly, “beer belly,” hypothyroidism, and adult onset diabetes. He especially used it for men, but others have used it as a female remedy. (These indications are from Phyllis Light, who studied with Tommie Bass.)

As an “irritating diuretic” carrot seed is contraindicated in acute kidney inflammation, so instead it is used in inactive, torpid congestion of the lungs, abdomen, or kidneys. By stimulating urine it moves minerally deposits out of the tissues, so it has been classified as an “antilithic”—it removes excessive mineralization associated with arthritis and kidney stones. “Queen Anne’s lace is a specific for osteoarthritis,” comments herbalist Kim Dudley, of Canberra. “We had a steady stream of little old ladies coming in until we couldn’t get any more.” As a stimulating carminative it increases secretion in the gastrointestinal tract, removing flatulence and windy colic. Some arthritic conditions are improved simply by increasing the outflow of water from the joints.

An application of the roots of the domesticated carrot, fresh or boiled, has long been recommended as an application to nasty sores and ulcers. William Cook (1869, 399) writes, “Sores in which it seems impossible to arouse a healing process by ordinary means will usually improve at once under this application. The raw carrots are not to be continued after full vital action in the part has been established.” He recommends them in irritable ulcers and septic sores, phagedenic, cancerous, cachectic, malignant, scrofulous, tubercular, fetid, abscessed, and so on.

TASTE:

pungent • warm • stimulating, oily

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Fatigue, loss of will power; lowered metabolic rate; hypothyroidism; adult onset diabetes.
- Gray complexion.
- Swollen, torpid mucosa.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Confusion of spiritual and sexual drives (flower essence).
- Sudden, unprovoked change from playful to ferocious (in dogs).

HEAD

- Night blindness.

RESPIRATION

- Chronic cough; shallow breathing.

DIGESTION

- Indigestion after meals, burping, flatulence, windy colic.
- Thin or overweight; hard time assimilating minerals and oils; food ferments in the stomach; liver function low.
- Constipated, stools hard and dry, with some periods of loose stool.
- Thread worms (tea).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Urinates frequently.
- *Edema*, stones, gravel, arthritic and gouty deposits.
- *Water retention* and weight gain, “beer belly.”
- Puffiness under the skin, water retention with the period, “baby fat,” especially in middle-aged women.
- *Water retention* with backache, swollen feet.
- Cystitis.

SEXUAL

- Infertility, low sex drive.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscles tire easily; knotty, thin muscles; fibromyalgia.
- Gout; minor aches and pains of arthritis, arthritic back pain.

SKIN

- Irritable ulcers, septic sores, carbuncles, degenerate abscesses, fetid ulcers, malignant, cachectic, and scrofulous sores; helps cleanse and form granulation (boiled roots of the cultivated carrot).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The best preparation is made from the green seeds in a higher proof alcohol that extracts and preserves the volatile oils. Dose need not be very large. An infusion is made by pouring an ounce of water over a teaspoon of the dried tops or seeds.

CAUTIONS:

I think of this as a moderately powerful remedy that should be treated with respect. It should not be used during pregnancy, even in small doses.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Nicholas Culpeper, Maude Grieve, R. Swinburne Clymer, William Cook (20), John Christopher, Robin Rose Bennet (fertility), Tommie Bass (14), Ben Charles Harris (11), Phyllis Light, Flower Essence Society (2), Yolanda LaCombe (5), Christopher Menzies-Trull (6, 19).

Dipsacus sylvestris. Teasel.

Dipsacus sylvestris *is native to Europe but widely naturalized in North and South America. It is used to tease the wool, but has little history of medicinal use until recently. On the other hand,* Dipsacus japonica, *the Asian teasel, has an old history of medicinal application. It is used to heal fractures, rheumatism, torn tendons, and bruises. However, it is described as acting on the "kidney essence," which is the source of bones, and the "liver blood," the source of tendons, so there is an idea that it has a deep, profound influence. The late William LeSassier introduced* D. sylvestris *into practice in North America as a substitute for the Eastern species and I learned from him to use it for catastrophic injuries of the joints and tendons. Later, when I was searching for a remedy for Lyme disease I remembered that teasel was said to act on the kidney jing. Syphilis is viewed as an attack on the kidney essence in traditional medicine (East or West), and since Lyme disease is due to a syphilitic spirochete, I surmised that teasel would be a possible remedy for this dreadful disease. Besides which, it acts on the connective tissue, joints, bones, tendons, and muscles, very much like Lyme. This has been verified in my practice and that of many others and in fact there is now medical research on the subject. I wish we had other "specifics" like teasel for dreadful diseases; this is one of the few. Teasel contains bitters, glucosides, inulin, and mineral salts*.

Sir John Hill (1740, 365) is one of the few old British herbalists who offered an opinion about teasel. "The root is used: it is bitter, and, given in infusion, strengthens the stomach, and creates an appetite. It is also good against obstructions of the liver and the jaundice. People have an opinion of the water that stands in the hollow of the leaves, being good to take away freckles."

Teasel is an important remedy for conditions where the muscles are torn, badly injured, or inflamed. Especially where the large joints (shoulders, hips) are torn and damaged. Where people have lost the ability to function—"had a use, but lost it," as William

LeSassier emphasized. In addition, it is a specific for Lyme disease; unfortunately, it only works in some cases (Matthew Wood).

Dipsacus japonica is used for broken bones, torn, disconnected tendons, weakness of the lower back, loins, and knees, vaginal bleeding, and prospective loss of the fetus (Lu, 1994, 209; see Bensky and Gamble, 1986, for references to the kidney essence and liver blood).

TASTE:

bitter

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Large, bulky people who, when they throw out a joint, tend to really damage the tissues, due to the weight and momentum applied to the joint.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- "People who had a use, but lost it."

HEAD

- Ocular inflammation.
- Excessive wrinkles on the face.

DIGESTION

- Lack of appetite.
- Parasites in intestine.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Jaundice.

FEMALE

- Pregnancy: threatening loss of the child.

- Postpartum: restorative for women who have had a Cesarean.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Complete or partial debility from inflammation and breakdown of the joints and muscles*.
- *Lyme disease*.
- *Severely damaged joints and muscles*.
- Broken bones.

SKIN

- Eczema, psoriasis, acne, impetigo.
- Reduces scars.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Teasel is a biennial so the roots are dug during the first year, or even during the winter. Dosage should be small. Chronic cases will aggravate after about two or three weeks. Persist in small doses (1–3 drops, 1–3x/day) for six weeks.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, William LeSassier (2, 10, 12), John Hill (5, 7), Henry Lu (*Dipsacus japonica*—8, 9, 13), Matthew Wood (1, 10, 11, 12, 15), Christopher Menzies-Trull (3–6, 14).

Elettaria cardamomum. Cardamom Seed.

Cardamom is a member of the ginger family long used in the Old World as a warming stimulant. "It's a lot like ginger but more aromatic and less hot" (Julia Graves). It contains starch, fixed oils, and volatile oils (up to 4%).

Like many aromatics, cardamom has a special affinity for the mucosa of the gastrointestinal and respiratory tracts. It is specific for damp, hot weather causing a cold stomach with diarrhea. It kindles the digestive fire.

TASTE:

pungent, sweet • warm • stimulating, aromatic

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Clears the mind.
- Colds, coughs, bronchitis, asthma.
- Loss of taste, hoarse voice.
- Cold, damp stomach; chronic indigestion with bloating, belching, gas, and hiccoughs.
- Pressure in the chest from bloating in the stomach.
- Belching, regurgitation, vomiting in children.
- Indigestion from stress, tension, and nerve weakness.
- *Sickness from damp, hot weather*.

PREPARATION, CONTRAINDICATIONS, AND DOSAGE:

Buy whole cardamom. When removed from the pod and ground, the seeds rapidly lose flavor. The fresh seeds or seeds in the pods are used. Infusion, 2–3 pods per cup, keep on the lid and do not boil. Grind up the pods, mix with butter and honey to make an edible paste.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–8), Vasant Lad and David Frawley (1, 2, 3, 6), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (4, 5, 7), Michael Tierra (8).

Eleutherococcus senticosus. "Siberian Ginseng."

"Siberian ginseng" is a member of the Araliaceae family native to northeastern Asia. We owe most of what we know about it to studies carried out by Russian researchers. It was proved in practice by Russian athletes who use it as a tonic to improve stamina. It is now widely used in the East and West. The name "Siberian ginseng" was introduced by commercial marketers to provide a handle for people already familiar with the ginsengs to grasp on to. Recently, the Food and Drug Administration, in the United States, has ruled that commercial interests cannot use this name, as it was not traditionally called ginseng. It contains eleutherosides (up to 0.9%), triterpenoid saponins, volatile oils (up to 0.8%), and polysaccharides.

Russian researchers believed that Siberian ginseng acts on the hypothalamus because it has a mild, normalizing effect throughout the endocrine system. It improves response to environmental stress, which is under hypothalamic regulation. It causes a gentle warming effect toward the periphery while reducing excess internal heat. Blood circulation and cardiovascular health are improved. Herbalist Barbara St. Dennis comments, "Siberian ginseng is particularly good for people who are overreactive. They are sensitive to temperature changes and suffer from exaggerated ups and downs—spiritual, emotional and physical. This can lead to adrenal exhaustion."

Siberian ginseng thus appears to regulate the thyroid, which is better able to adjust to changing metabolic demands in the cells. Eleutherococcus is normalizing for both high and low thyroid, but especially the former. It decreases core heat but increases peripheral warmth. Blood sugar levels are stabilized. It also acts on exhausted adrenals, increasing cortisone secretion. "You can watch the circles

under the eyes go," notes herbalist William LeSassier, referring to one of the most prominent symptoms seen in adrenocortical exhaustion. I have found this to be a very reliable indication for eleuthero. The only other plant with this as a prominent symptom is *Aralia racemosa*, a close cousin with similar properties.

Scientific studies have proven that there is improvement in male sexual function and it is suspected that there is also improvement in female function, but this has not been proven. Barbara St. Dennis comments, "Women under stress are not sexually receptive, in case anybody hasn't noticed. Siberian ginseng helps women be more receptive, relaxed, and gentle. Of course, I haven't proven it scientifically!"

Herbalist Ellen Hopman says that Siberian ginseng is particularly suited to individuals who have been weakened by the "enervating influence of civilization." They have not had to rely upon their bodies to build up stamina by facing the stresses of nature. It also gives such people a better grounding, or relationship to the Earth. It also works on people who have been weakened by prolonged stress, environmental, psychological, physical, and so forth. William Mitchell, ND (2003, 2), recommends it for nervous exhaustion, depression, flu, and convalescence, from disease or surgery.

Siberian ginseng can act as either a stimulant or a sedative, depending on the person. However, too much can cause overstimulation in a person who does not need it. Depleted people can use it for a longer time. Barbara St. Dennis gives some guidelines for use. "If an endocrine problem is suspected, first give Siberian ginseng and see what happens. Be patient. One dropperful, morning and night. It is wonderful for the elderly, give for as long as six months, especially in the winter. It is warming. Do not mix it with other herbs."

TASTE:

slightly sweet • fibrous or woody

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Brain fog, can't focus, spaced people, not taking care of themselves.
- Nervous exhaustion, "adrenal exhaustion."
- Headache.
- Dizziness
- Depression.
- Insomnia, nightmares.
- *Dark circles under the eyes*.
- Hyper- and hypothyroidism due to hypothalamic stress.
- Adrenaline burnout.
- Poor appetite.
- Angina, shortness of breath, heart palpitations, debility.
- Sore limbs, arthritic pains.
- Strengthens the periphery to hold in the sweat.
- Sensitive to temperature changes; very cold in the winter.
- Influenza.
- Convalescence; from disease or surgery.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Comes to market as a powder or prepared. Can be too warming in summertime, hence best given during the winter months (Barbara St. Dennis). I use small doses, 1–10 drops, 1–3x/day. William Mitchell recommends 6 mg. per kilogram of body weight 2x/day, or 90 drops of the tincture 2x/day. He also recommends 30 drops in 1/2 teaspoonful of glycine, in a cup of hot water.

CAUTIONS:

Regarded as quite safe, but like the other ginsengs it can be too warming or stimulating in some cases.

LITERATURE:

Russian research, Ellen Hopman, Barbara St. Dennis, William LeSassier (7), William Mitchell (5, 16), Matthew Wood (7-confirmed).

Equisetum arvense, E. hyemale. Horsetail.

Horsetail or shavegrass is an ancient, nonflowering plant that grows on wet sand and is therefore exceedingly high in silicon, from which sand is made. It is, as a consequence, known as "vegetable silicon" and used as a "silica tonic" for problems believed to be due to a shortage of this element.

Critics have raised the objection that the silicon in horsetail is inactive and therefore it is unscientific to use horsetail as a "silica tonic." This is a materialist view of the situation. It is horsetail's ability to take up silicon, with the tiny amount of biologically active silicon within it; that is the origin of its medicinal powers. Horsetail has the "intelligence" to deal with silica and share this "knowledge" with the organism in need of the substance. Additional criticism might be leveled against this idea from the fact that the human body, indeed the whole world, contains an overwhelming amount of silicon, or silica aluminates (sand); organisms therefore do not need silica supplementation. But again, this is too materialistic a thought. What is missing in the organism is the ability to use small amounts of this element in biological processes. *This is what shavegrass provides*.

Furthermore, such critics clearly have not used horsetail as a silica tonic. I have used this plant for twenty years as an analog of homeopathic silicon (Silicea) *and as an analog of milky oatseed (also high in this element) and it has well served this purpose. Almost all the symptoms for which homeopathic silicon are prescribed, from nervousness to connective tissue weaknesses, are helped by horsetail*.

Silica has the ability to externalize or bring substances to the surface. This is seen in its homeopathic provings and clinical applications, where it has been used to open a vent to release pus or bring foreign or dead material to the surface. It strengthens the surface, a fact that is well known to farmers. Chicken feed mixtures employ granite dust (high in silicon) to strengthen the shells of eggs. It strengthens structural material generally, in the cartilage, bone, and skin, and to lessen hemorrhaging. Rudolf Steiner (1975, 133) noted that silica promoted the transportation of materials to the periphery of the body. In fact, he looked upon horsetail as an example of a siliceous plant that had this curative capacity. As a consequence, horsetail is indicated by weak hair, loss of hair, split ends, weak nails, ridged nails, cracking nails, sore, irritated nail beds, hangnails, picking and biting of nails, nervousness, and insecurity. Horsetail also has a powerfully strengthening effect on

the connective tissue, which requires large amounts of silicon. It is also a good *antifungal for fungus growing under the toenails*.

In addition, *Equisetum* has an affinity for the urinary tract (weakness of the mucosa, burning pains, cystitis). It is a nourishing diuretic, increasing both the watery and solid parts of the urine. Dr. Lyman Watkins (quoted by Rolla Thomas) writes, "We have found this remedy of value in males past middle life, with large mucous discharges from the bladder." Rolla Thomas (1903) calls it "invaluable" in gravel and irritation of the urinary organs.

TASTE:

earthen • cool

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Faint-hearted, yielding, nervous personality; lack of flint (cf. homeopathic *Silicea*).
- Nervous habits, picks at things, chews nails, twirls hair.
- *Weak hair, split ends; weak, ridged, cracked nails; hangnails*.

RESPIRATION

- General susceptibility to allergies, due to weak mucosa of the upper respiratory tract; itching of the mouth, nose.
- Chronic asthma.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema.
- Chronic nephritis (2–3 cups a day).
- Bladder infections.

- Weak bladder with dribbling.

OTHER

- Cool extremities; hands, feet; chills easily.
- Broken bones.
- Hemorrhage.
- Dry skin.
- Fungus under toenails (internal and external).
- Improved healing from surgery in the aged.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

It is said that horsetail should only be picked when it is found growing in open sunlight, not in the shade. The stalks are picked when they are still tender, crushed to dry the water in the joints, and used by decoction. If the water is not removed, the herb may rot on drying. However, this water is perhaps the strongest medicinal part so an extract from the fresh plant in alcohol is an excellent preparation. Decoction: boil in a covered vessel for 15–20 minutes (infusion is not sufficient). Flavor with peppermint or lemon balm (Otto Wolff, 1991, 86). Tincture: I use 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day. A more common dosage is 10–25 drops.

CAUTIONS:

Horsetail herb is “full of sand,” so to speak, and should not be taken internally. It must be decocted in water, tinctured in alcohol, or extracted, with the marc thrown away, or it can cause GI irritation.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (6, 8–14), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 3, 4, 14), Vasant Lad and David Frawley, Otto Wolff (7), Michael Moore (5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15).

Eryngium maritimum. Sea Holly.

This is a European cousin of the American eryngo, or rattlesnake master. They are unusual members of the parsley family. Sea holly is native to the coasts of Europe, where it grows in sandy soil subject to watery and salty processes—a perfect signature for renal disease. One would presume that it has properties similar to its American cousin for there are similarities in the accounts. It contains mucilage, saponins, acids, resin, and minerals (sodium, potassium, silicon). "They are balsamic as well as diuretic" (John Hill, 1740, 167).

Eryngo "grows with us by the seaside," notes Sir John Hill, "and is kept also in gardens because of its virtues. It is prickly like a thistle, and the whole plant appears not green, but whitish." The root is the part used; "the best way is to take them candied; they are good against coughs, and weaknesses of all kinds. They have also caused noble virtues as a diuretic, and are good against the jaundice; for this last purpose, a decoction made from the fresh roots is best.

"In the olden times it was much more used than it is now, and was prepared in the form of a candy," writes Richard Hool (1922, 80). This is an author who is extensively experienced with sea holly, and with whom it is well to consult on its properties and uses. "I have probably used the sea holly as much as, and possibly more than, any other practitioner.

"The complaints for which it may be employed are as follows: Coughs, bronchitis, asthma, consumption, liver affections, kidney diseases, yellow jaundice, stone and gravel, dropsy, rheumatism (acute or chronic), sciatica, nervousness, fits, palpitation of the heart, loss of vital force, and as an antacid for correcting bile or a general debilitated state of the tissues.

"Sea holly I have for a long time used in the crude state as an efficient remedy in the treatment of the disorders of the liver. In cases where the liver shows symptoms of sluggishness and allows large quantities of uric acid to accumulate, it has been proved to be an excellent remedy, when combined with wild carrot and made

into a strong decoction, and given in 2-oz. doses four times a day. I have seen wonderful success in the removal of uric acid from the liver, and a complete correction of sluggishness, by the use of this prescription." For jaundice he compounded equal parts of sea holly and barberry bark. It is also beneficial for "kidney disease, stone in the bladder, gravel, and dropsy.

"In all cases of coughs, bronchitis, asthma and consumption I have found sea holly exceedingly useful, either alone or combined with black horehound, bur marigold, and crushed ginger.

"In the cure of both acute and chronic rheumatism I have seen some of the grandest results it is possible to achieve by the use of sea holly alone, given" in infusion. He mentions the case of a man who was suffering from "chronic nervous rheumatism," who was completely cured.

"Sea holly exercises a remarkable influence over the nervous system, giving tone and harmony of action, and awakening its latent energies to healthful activity. This peculiar stimulative property is of very great service in those cold and passive conditions which sometimes attend the development of strumous diseases [scrofulous swellings]; besides which sea holly has a special influence on the organs of generation, independent of its general constitutional influence, and for this reason it has proved of value in cases of prolapsus uteri, tendency to miscarriage, atony of the generative organs, sterility, and impotence—all of which have been cured by sea holly." Hool considers the reputation of sea holly as an aphrodisiac that exhausts the sexual instincts to be an unwarranted supposition made by writers who have no experience with the plant but generalize from its uses.

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Hydrocephalus in children.
- Coughs, bronchitis, asthma, tuberculosis.
- Liver torpor, jaundice.

- Kidney disease; stone in the bladder, gravel, and edema; uric acid retention.
- Uterine prolapse, tendency to miscarriage.
- Atony of the generative organs, sterility, and impotence.
- Rheumatism, acute and chronic.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Richard Hool (2–7), Charles Abbott (quoted by Richard Lucas) (1).

Eucalyptus globulus. Eucalyptus.

Eucalyptus is native to Australia, where it forms vast forests and savannahs. I remember seeing stands of horribly burned trees regrowing from deep inside themselves when I visited Canberra after the serious fires of 2001. I never saw such remarkable regeneration in any North American tree and it spoke to me of the tremendous healing power of this plant—possibly also, it should be used in burns. Eucalyptus is naturalized in California and other dry, warm climates around the world. The leaves contain flavonoids, bitters, resin, terpenes, and volatile oils (up to 3.5%). The oil produced from the leaves contains eucalyptol (80–85%).

Eucalyptus leaves, in infusion or tincture, are antiseptic and astringent. They are therefore suited to "relaxed mucous membranes with mucoid or purulent discharge." Thus, in respiratory catarrh and infection, also in nephritis and cystitis, dysentery, vaginal discharge, cervicitis, and cervical erosion. A specific indication is a "pale coated, dirty tongue with halitosis." It is also indicated in "coldness of the extremities with cold perspiration" (Menzies-Trull, 2003, 604). Compare with the cold symptoms given below from Rolla Thomas.

Eucalyptus oil is widely used as a medicated steam for pulmonary infection and congestion. It increases the absorption capacity of the

mucosa of the respiratory lining and the capillary bed of the lungs, thereby increasing blood-building, general capillary diffusion, and cellular oxidation (Gümbel, 1993, 200). It is also antiseptic and, by increasing pulmonary efficiency, expectorant. It is widely used in sinusitis, bronchitis, asthma, and tuberculosis.

TASTE:

aromatic • warm • stimulating

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Relaxed mucosa with mucus or purulent discharge.
- Conjunctivitis.
- Tongue coated pale and dirty, with bad breath.
- *Respiratory catarrh and infection*.
- Nephritis and cystitis.
- Dysentery.
- Vaginal discharge, cervicitis, cervical erosion.
- Sensation of coldness and weight in the bowels.
- Cold extremities.
- Cold perspiration.
- Perspiration during chill.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Internal dose: “in small dose, 10 drops in 4 ounces of water; or in ague, the larger dose of 10 drops to 1 dram” (Rolla Thomas).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dorothy Hall, Ellis (*Ellingwood’s Therapeutist*, 1908, 2, 7, 20) (2), Rolla Thomas (8–11), Dietrich Gümbel, Christopher Menzies-Trull (1, 3–7).

Eugenia caryophyllum. Clove.

Everyone is familiar with the clove buds used in cooking or the clove oil of dentistry and aromatherapy. I remember extracting the oil in organic chemistry classes in college. I thought, "This is just alchemy, but with modern names." Clove oil is an old herbal medicine. The clove is harvested from an evergreen tree native to Indonesia and the southern Philippines. Either the clove buds or the distilled oil is used.

Cloves are a sweet, warming stimulant used for cold/depressed tissue states. Clove oil is spicy, stimulating, and heating. It is classified as hot and dry in the third degree. It stimulates the circulation, raises the temperature of the body, increases digestion and nutrition, and is antiseptic. The volatile oils exit through the liver, bronchi, skin, and kidneys, and as they move through them they stimulate and disinfect. "It is the most powerful of the aromatic and carminative herbs" (Christopher, 1996, 462).

In large, localized doses the oil burns the skin. For safe use it is diluted to 1–2 drops in a cup of hot water. In moderate doses it is a powerful anodyne and soporific causing profound sleep. Eva Graf called it "the herbalist's sleeping pill" and an "extreme painkiller." In small doses it is stimulating to the nervous system, heightens the senses, and is considered an aphrodisiac. Like some remedies for tissue depression and cold *Eugenia* raises low blood pressure and is contraindicated in hypertension.

TASTE:

sweet, pungent • warm • aromatic

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Depression.
- Insomnia.
- Dizziness.
- Earache.
- Dry mouth, bad breath, deteriorated taste buds; opens the surface and draws out putrid material.
- Toothache (rub oil on gums as a palliative).
- Metallic taste in mouth in morning, on awakening.
- Colds, cough, bronchitis, asthma; chills with infection; catarrh.
- Laryngitis, pharyngitis.
- Indigestion, gas, hiccough, sour stomach, vomiting, nausea (chew the cloves).
- Abdominal pain, colic, flatulence, griping (poultice).
- Mucus colitis, diarrhea, dysentery.
- Abdominal cramps.
- Pregnancy; vomiting.
- Impotence.
- Backache.
- Rheumatism (external).
- Low blood pressure; poor peripheral circulation.
- Fever from putridity; temperature ups and downs; intermittent fever.
- Heavy metal toxicity; especially from copper and aluminum (combine with basil).
- Neuralgia (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The oil is most frequently used, 1–5 drops.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Christopher (5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21), Eva and Eugene Graf (1, 2, 5, 7, 13, 18, 19, 20), Vasant Lad and David Frawley, Julia Graves (2, 5).

Eupatorium cannabinum. Water Agrimony, Hemp Agrimony.

This European native is similar to the North American gravel root. It grows at the edge of the water and the land, sends up a pink/purple flower, and has a bitter, pungent taste. In all these properties it resembles its American cousin—though it is even more bitter and pungent, I believe. It was not as important a remedy in Europe as is gravel root in the New World, but it probably possesses similar properties. The account by Maude Grieve (1931, 15) depends on that by W. T. Fernie (1914, 21). He relies on homeopathic provings. I was unsure whether these were provings of Eupatorium cannabinum *or one of its American cousins, so it is unclear whether the information relates to the European plant directly or not. The following is from Grieve*.

"Herbalists recognize its cathartic, diuretic and anti-scorbutic properties, and consider it a good remedy for purifying the blood, either used by itself, or in combination with other herbs. A homeopathic tincture is prepared, given in frequent small well-diluted doses with water, for influenza, or for a similar feverish chill, and a tea made with boiling water poured on the dry leaves will give prompt relief if taken hot at the onset of a bilious catarrh or of influenza.

"In Holland it was used by the peasants for jaundice with swollen feet, and given as an alterative or purifier of the blood in the spring and against scurvy. The leaves have been used in infusion as a tonic, and in the fen districts where it prevails, such medicines are very necessary. Country people used to lay the leaves on bread considering that they thus prevented it from becoming moldy."

Euphrasia officinalis. Eyebright.

Eyebright is a dainty flower native to cold, boreal regions of northern Europe. Analogous species are found in boreal regions of North America and are used interchangeably with the European species. They are members of the Scrophulariaceae family. The Euphrasias are becoming increasingly hard to obtain and should be considered endangered. They contain essential oils, tannins, glycosides, glucosides, resin, and bitter principles. The properties are particularly attributed to the tannins; it is used as a mild astringent principally for eye problems. Herbalist 7Song notes that eyebright is more cooling than ragweed, another remedy for the eyes and allergies.

" 'Tis of great esteem in distempers of the eyes," wrote Dr. John Quincy (1736, 69). From ancient times to the present, eyebright has been principally used in ocular diseases. It also acts on the mucosa of the upper respiratory tract. As an astringent it is drying and mucus-reducing. Astringents have an uncanny ability to improve eye problems, even those that seem structural (cf. bilberry).

"Eyebright constitutes a remedial agent of considerable usefulness in catarrhal diseases of the mucous membranes, both of the respiratory organs and the intestinal canal. In acute 'cold of the head,' when given in doses of ten drops every two or three hours, it will effect a cure. It is especially adapted to the colds of young children, and is promptly effective in the snuffles of infants.

"Euphrasia is a remedy for all diseases of the mucous tract with increased discharges. It is one of the most reliable specific agents for acute coryza, being indicated in the copious discharge of watery mucus. It controls cough, hoarseness, headache and earache supervening upon acute catarrhal affections. During or following measles, it is one of the best agents to control the inflammatory catarrhal conditions, and to prevent catarrhal aftereffects, as nasal catarrh, catarrhal ophthalmia, catarrhal otitis, etc. The more acute the condition, the better euphrasia acts. It is indicated in acute catarrhal conditions of the eyes, ears and nose, and where there is secretion of acrid mucus from the eyes and nose with heat and pain in the frontal sinus" (John William Fyfe, 1909, 531).

Here is a case history from my own files. A forty-something man who was normally healthy had, during the last year, become allergic to a number of things and developed a chronic sinus blockage with a little mucus in the lungs. Allergies were formerly seasonal; now all the time. A year ago the eyes became horribly sensitive with itchy, red conjunctiva; now the sinuses, chest, and ears are congested. Wakes in the morning with gunk in the eyes. Nose alternately running and plugged. Ears always feel filled with a fluid. Frontal nasal discharge. Dark around eyes, pressure in them. Tongue slightly red and pointed. Eyebright fit the symptoms like a glove, but I also had him take Easter lily because the mucus in the lungs seemed dried out. Within a month the symptoms were back to their chronic, manageable level.

Derby herbalist George Slack (1919, 110) relates, "The author's eyes were once badly scalded, causing a mass of matter, which blinded him; an infusion of the eyebright was applied for a few days, sight was restored, and has been good ever since."

TASTE:

astringent • cool

TISSUE STATES:

relaxation, excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

EYES AND NOSE

- Rhinitis, sinusitis, free secretion of clear, watery mucus, irritable sneezing and tearing.
- Perennial allergic rhinitis; mold, fungi, dust mite feces.
- Sneezing and tearing on going out into the sunlight.
- Conjunctivitis; bright red conjunctiva; irritated eyes with irritating free secretion from the nose; gummed up eyelids in

the morning.
- Catarrhal blepharitis.
- Allergenic symptoms affecting the eyes (small, oft-repeated doses best).
- Cataract, rheumatic choroiditis, corneal opacity.

SKIN

- Hives.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

If not available, the homeopathic potency (3x, 6x), which has about the same properties, can be used instead of the bulk herb.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (herbal, homeopathic), William LeSassier (1), Billie Potts (3), 7Song (2, 8), Julia Graves (4).

Filipendula ulmaria. Meadowsweet.

The old authors generally refer to this plant under the Latin name Spirea, *but it has since been classified as a* Filipendula. *The second name* ulmaria *remains. Meadowsweet is a member of the rose family. It has the bitter, astringent taste of salicin and was the source after which aspirin was named (a-spir-in). It possesses similar properties, but is nontoxic and soothes the stomach, rather than inflaming it like aspirin. In addition to salicylates, it contains flavonol glycosides (including spiraeoside, rutin, hyperin, and kaempferol glucoside), so it is cooling, where aspirin is irritating.*

"Meadowsweet is a true normalizer of a badly functioning stomach," wrote Captain Frank Roberts, NIMH. "It regulates acidity and it

rectifies alkalinity. This is the remedy which should replace all the alkalis now on the market. Meadowsweet, when made into a strong tea and a small cupful given every two or three hours, will be highly beneficial in all cases of fever, no matter of what kind, and in cases of dyspepsia caused through inflammation of the mucous surfaces and glands of the stomach. It will also be found not only to relieve, but eventually cure all cases of sour belchings, sour eructations, nausea, sickness and vomiting, waterbrash, swellings after meals or vomiting before meals, bile, or bilious attacks."

Richard Hool (1922, 73) describes additional uses. "The value of meadowsweet in the treatment of gravelly affections depends more upon its alterative than upon its direct diuretic influences, as it is more effectual in the removal of uric acid deposits than of other calculous formations, although it is beneficially employed in almost all affections of the kidneys and bladder.

"Meadowsweet, if used for treatment of rheumatism, will also be found very highly beneficial either in the acute or chronic form, as well as in all cases of rheumatic fever, either of long or short duration, and which may have been caused by hepatic, or liver derangements or from exposure to cold or wet, or from damp clothes, starvation, or general derangement of the whole of the digestive organs, causing an overcharge and excessive retention of uric acid in the muscles and joints.

"By means of its anti-acid and astringent properties, it removes uric-acid deposits from the blood, muscles, and joints; expels the waste, morbid, and diseased particles of matter from the body, and by that process removes the inflammation and pains of the parts affected. It drives away the fever; restores the action of the liver, kidneys, and bladder; renews and tones up the powers of all the digestive organs by bringing them back to their normal condition; restores the appetite, strengthens the nerves and muscles, and when that is done the patient is restored to health and strength."

TASTE:

bitter • dry • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

DIGESTION

- Headache with indigestion.
- Full feeling in the stomach, with nausea, mucus in the stomach, lack of appetite.
- “Atonic dyspepsia with heartburn and hyperacidity” (Bastyr).
- Irritation, acidity, of the stomach; abuse of antacids.
- Peptic ulcer.
- Diarrhea in young children.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Acute catarrhal cystitis.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Influenza, ache in the joints.
- Arthritic pain in the extremities.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The dried, aerial parts are used to make a tea, or as a tincture. Dose in digestive complaints is about 2 ml of the tincture, 3x/day; in arthritis it is 120 drops, 3x/day (William Mitchell).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Frank Roberts (2, 3, 4), Richard Hool (8, 9), John Bastyr (3, 7), William Mitchell (5).

Foeniculum vulgare. Fennel.

Fennel is a member of the Apiaceae family native to Europe, Africa, and Asia, although nicely naturalized in warm, dry, salty soils in California, Arizona, Mexico, Australia, and elsewhere. It has long been used in Greek, Arabic, Indian, and European medicine.

Fennel seed has been widely used as a carminative to improve digestion. As a moist, oily herb it lessens dryness and flatulence. It has antispasmodic properties and is a specific for colic, especially in infants. It thins unhealthy mucus and improves the secretion and health of the fluids. Hence, it is beneficial for the lungs. “Its relief of pain and release of mucus in stubborn cases of bronchitis are sufficiently well-known” in European medicine (Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff, 1982, 339). “Fennel breaks and expels wind; provokes urine and eases its passage; eases pain and breaks the stone in the kidney; stops hiccough; cools the stomach and increases

the appetite; cleanses and clears the liver, spleen, and gall, and removes pain in the spleen; yellow jaundice; gout, and cramps. It is an antidote for poison, and it is good for shortness of breath; stoppages of the lungs; cleanses and regulates the blood; promotes the menses and eases the private parts" (Chalid Ottway, 1933, 195).

TASTE:

(seed) sweet, acrid • warm, drying • diffusive, slightly oily

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, constriction

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Memory.

HEAD

- Migraine, sinus trouble.
- Matter in the eye, conjunctivitis (eyewash).

RESPIRATION

- Hoarseness, coughs, congestion, bronchitis, asthma, emphysema.
- Shortness of breath.

DIGESTION

- *Excess appetite, weight gain.*
- Digestive weakness in children and the elderly.
- *Colic and bloating in infants and children.*
- *Slow digestion; halitosis, abdominal swelling, constipation.*
- *Spasmodic digestion; hiccough, flatulence, abdominal swelling, intestinal spasm, irritable bowel syndrome.*

- Food poisoning.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Jaundice (large quantities).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- *Water retention; difficult or burning urination*.
- Kidney stones (large quantities).
- Bedwetting.

FEMALE

- Menstruation: deficient.
- Pregnancy: morning sickness.
- *Lactation: increases* (boiled with barley)

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Gout.

OTHER

- Lowers cholesterol.
- Insect, snake bites.
- Convulsions, fits, in small children.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

"The seed and root are both used for medicinal purposes. Wild Fennel possesses stronger properties than cultivated" (Ottway, 1933, 195). The dried seeds are eaten raw after a meal or infused, 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoonful to the cup of just boiled water. Fennel seed can be used as a tincture, 3 drops on the tongue or 15 drops in water, 2–3x/day. Diluted oil of fennel can be massaged over the abdomen for constipation. The eyewash has to be made fresh, boiled for sterilization and cooled to a comfortable temperature (William Mitchell).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Bastyr (1, 3), William Mitchell (1), Hildegard von Bingen (2), Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff (3, 4, 8), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli, Vasant Lad and David Frawley, Louise Tenney (4, 6, 8, 10, 18, 21, 22), Chalid Ottway (5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 21), John Hill (12, 14).

Fragaria virginiana, F. vesca. Wild Strawberry.

Strawberries are members of the rose family native to the temperate northern hemisphere. The Latin name comes from either frigida *(cool)*, fragrans *(fragrant), or* frango *(I break), the latter referring to the traditional idea that the exposed seeds are a signature for stone-breaking. And indeed, strawberry is an excellent remedy for a too alkaline and stony body environment. The common name refers, not to straw, but to the strewn habit of growth. The leaves are the part most often used in herbal medicine. They contain fruit acids, leucoanthocyanin, vitamin C, catechins (all cooling), sugars, tannins, mucilage, fiber, and volatile oils. Also high in iron. The small wild fruit is associated in Ojibwe culture, via its shape, with the heart and womb*.

Strawberry leaf takes its place among the members of the rose family that are cooling or refrigerant. This is indicated pharmacologically by the high content of fruit acids, catechins, and leucoanthocyanins, all cooling, supplemented by nourishing, lubricating sugars and mucilage. Of course, the cooling influence is evident to anyone who eats the fruit or drinks a tea from the leaf. It is especially indicated by heat, redness, swelling, and dryness in and around the eyes. It is also indicated when the fluids are dried out—lack of saliva, lack of appetite, dry throat and lungs, scanty, dark urine. It probably stimulates the salivary glands, like *Trifolium*.

Strawberry has other actions. R. Swinburne Clymer (1933, 96) emphasized the action of strawberry as a kidney stimulating diuretic. “Fairly rich in potassium and iodine but well supplied with sodium, the two elements which prevent or are necessary in the treatment of such symptoms as puffy, pale face and drowsiness, watery stools, vomiting of water fluids, dryness of tongue, stertorous breathing, tonsils covered with yellow, creamy coating. If a sufficient amount of sodium is supplied to the system in the beginning, these symptoms may never appear.”

The organ affinities of *Fragaria* are important. As a coolant it helps to soothe hyperacidity in the stomach (like *Rumex*). It apparently cools the small intestine as well, for Grieve recommends it for sprue, or allergies in the lymphoid gut tissue. Penetrating into the interior of the organism, strawberry reduces alkaline overdeposition. Thus it is used to reduce stones, arthritic deposition, and plaque on the teeth (here it is a specific according to Dr. Withering of foxglove fame). The cooling influence reaches into the liver and kidneys. As a remedy for allergies, we see that it increases protein breakdown in the liver. This, and the fact that it contains salts and reduces excess alkaline deposits, explains its powerful action on the kidneys.

Rudolf Steiner introduced strawberry as a liver remedy for high blood sugar problems—many of the sweet fruits have this value (cf. blueberry). The high iron level also indicates a possible liver connection via iron and bile metabolism. The many valuable uses of strawberry have not been entirely understood and utilized. We are

prompted to give it more consideration by the fact that doctors in Withering's time considered it an important medicine. Consumption of strawberries has been shown to reduce the rate of cancer in populations. The berry is used in Ayurvedic medicine to protect against viruses, herpes simplex, DNA damage, and cancer (Tirtha, 1998, 134).

I recently had a case where a woman was afflicted with severe reactions to mold, some of which was growing in her house. She had redness and itching in the eyes, redness, swelling, and wrinkling around the eyes (left worse), with sneezing and nose and sinus irritation. Nothing helped until I gave strawberry, when she was deeply soothed, cooled, and relieved.

TASTE:

sweet • cool and moist • mucilaginous, slightly astringent

TISSUE STATE:

excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- "Melancholy, faintings, and passions of the heart" (William Salmon).
- Nervousness (in people and animals).

HEAD

- *Red, inflamed eyes;* stye.
- Swollen, red, dry tongue; with painful itching and swelling (caused and cured).

MOUTH, GUMS, TEETH

- *Plaque on the teeth.*

- Discoloration of the teeth (juice of the fresh fruit on the teeth for 5 minutes, cleansed with warm water and a pinch of bicarbonate of soda).
- Spongy gums, periodontal disease, loose teeth.
- Ulcers of the mouth, gums, and throat; sore throat (gargle).
- Lack of saliva, no appetite, anemia, weakness.

RESPIRATION

- Dry lungs.

DIGESTION

- Diabetes, jaundice.
- Swollen spleen.
- Stomach acidity; bleeding from the stomach.
- Diarrhea, obstinate dysentery (roots).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Kidneys; stones.
- Bladder infections with urine that is alkaline.
- Scanty, dark urine, passage painful, sharp, and scalding.
- Imparts a violet-like fragrance to the urine.

FEMALE

- Menses: irregularity, excessive bleeding.
- Pregnancy: morning sickness, prevent miscarriage (cf. *Rubus*).
- Postpartum: *night sweats*.
- Lactation: increases production.
- Vaginal yeast infections, with itch.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Gout (cf. cherries).

SKIN

- *Eczema* and psoriasis (internal and external).

- Hives from overconsumption of seasonal fruit (but it can cause this as well).

FEVER

- Sunstroke, sunburn.
- Fevers.
- Convalescence after an illness; weakness, fragility (fruit, leaf tea).

OTHER

- High blood pressure.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion: 1 teaspoon of dried herb to 1 pint of water, steep 20 minutes, drink warm (Rogers).

CAUTIONS:

More likely to cause allergies than many other members of the rose family.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1, 3–12, 14–29), William Salmon (1, 3, 8, 17, 28), William Withering (5), Maude Grieve (6), Linnaeus (24), Robert Dale Rogers (2), Louise Tenney (2, 14, 19, 20, 24, 29).

Fucus vesiculosus. Kelp.

Kelp was originally best known as a weight reducer. It contains iodine, an essential element for the thyroid. By stimulating an iodine deficient thyroid it reduces weight and sometimes eliminates

goiter. It was especially associated with torpid obesity with cold, clammy skin. From this its general use in hypothyroidism arose, but today most thyroid problems are not due to iodine deficiency, since this element is supplemented in the diet. Fucus is likely to often disappoint, if it is used for hypothyroidism. A more effective specific here is black walnut, with kelp to be used when there is nodularity in the thyroid (Phyllis Light).

Fucus contains high levels of polysaccharides, polyphenols, tannins, sterols, minerals (iodine, sodium, chlorine, phosphorus, iron, calcium, sulphur, silicon, potassium, magnesium, copper, zinc, manganese, and other trace elements), and vitamins (A, B complex, C, and E). It is demulcent and nutritive. It thins the blood and is useful in fatty degeneration of the heart. It cleanses the lymphatic vessels and kidneys, and has antiviral and antineoplastic capacities. It can be used externally as a liniment on rheumatic and arthritic pain.

TASTE:

salty

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- Headache.

THYROID

- Goiter from lack of iodine.
- Weight gain from inactive thyroid due to lack of iodine.

RESPIRATION

- Asthma.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Vascular health.

DIGESTION

- Digestion, poor.
- Gas.
- Colitis.
- Constipation.
- Morning sickness.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallbladder.

PANCREAS

- Diabetes.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Water retention.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis.
- Nervous disorders.
- Neuritis.

FEMALE

- Uterus.

MALE

- Prostate.

SKIN

- Complexion.
- Wrinkles.
- Eczema.
- Fingernails.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Louise Tenney (1–4, 5–13, 15–22).

Fumaria officinalis. Fumitory.

Fumitory is an old European medicine, little used in North America. The ashen white leaves, rising from the earth, inspired the name fumitory, or "earth smoke." There is an old legend that this plant sprang, not from seed, but from vapor leaving the earth. In North America, the place of fumitory was taken by its cousin, Dicentra canadensis *(turkey corn, corydalis). These medicines have a similar sphere of action in sluggish digestion and "toxic blood." Since* Dicentra *is almost extinct due to overharvesting in the nineteenth century and loss of habitat in the Eastern Woodland forest, fumitory, a common inhabitant of fields and ditches in Europe, might be used in its place.*

Fumaria is used in modern German medicine as a specific to open the gall duct and flush bile and pancreatic enzymes. This indicates that it has a specific action on secretin, a hormone from the stomach. In folk medicine, it is used more subtly to stimulate sluggish digestion, move the stool and urine moderately, and "cleanse the blood." It appears to raise the metabolism, like *Dicentra*, and to act on low thyroid. It should be thought of when skin lesions from "bad blood" or thyroid deficiency are connected with sluggish digestion.

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Hysteria.

EYES

- Conjunctivitis (eyewash; causes pain at first).

CARDIOVASCULAR

- High blood pressure, arteriosclerosis.

DIGESTION

- Sluggish digestion, food does not digest, sits; lack of enzymes and bile; constipation, hemorrhoids; especially when associated with “bad blood” or low thyroid.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Liver congestion; gallbladder congestion; gallstones, gallstone colic.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Rheumatism.

SKIN

- Acne, dermatitis, eczema, associated with digestive disorder.
- “Skin diseases of an eruptive character” (Neil).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Fumaria is difficult to dry and keep, hence is not used as a dried herb.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, William Salmon, James Neil (2, 8).

Galium aparine. Cleavers, Lady's Bedstraw, Goose Grass.

Cleavers is a member of the bedstraw clan (Galium) belonging to the Rubiaceae (coffee) family. It is native to Europe but extensively naturalized in temperate regions. It contains flavonoids and coumarins (which give it the sweet flavor), iridoid monoterpenes (including asperuloside, a laxative), and various alkaloids. The roasted mature seed heads make true coffee, complete with the caffeine.

Cleavers has a long history of use in folk medicine. It has strong affinities to the lymphatics, kidneys, and nervous system. The vanilla smell of the flowering plant indicates the presence of coumarins that thin the blood, but for this function herbalists usually turn to its cousins, madder *(Rubia tinctoria)* and woodruff *(Galium asperula)*. Coumarins are not supposed to cross the intestinal membrane, but they probably have an influence by stimulating immune cells in the membrane. It is likely that the coumarins in cleavers assist in the penetration and breakup of fibrous tissue and calcifications in the body for which it is known. Cleavers has the ability to work calcifications, concretions, and

fibrosities out of the tissues (muscles, lymph, kidneys). It has been used for the removal of gravel and suppression of urine. Herbs that remove urinary stones also usually remove calcifications in the system. Thus they are called “anti-lithics” in traditional medicine, a category that modern biomedicine does not acknowledge.

Cleavers is primarily used for lymphatic congestion. It is the main lymphatic remedy that is cooling. Red root is neutral whereas calendula is warming. Thus, cleavers is used in lymphatic conditions where there is evidence of mild warmth and inflammation. It also acts on the breasts. It is indicated in breast tissue that is generally fibrous, rather than tissue with scattered cysts or nodularities (red clover, Easter lily, scrophularia).

Samuel Henry (1814, 75) treats us to a case. “I was called to see an elderly lady, laboring under violent pain and suppression of urine. After necessary evacuations [catharsis to remove water via the bowels], I took a large handful of the leaves of this goose grass, which was gathered fresh from the meadow, and poured three pints of boiling water on them, and ordered a tea-cup full sweetened with honey, every half hour until I returned from visiting a patient near by. In about three hours, when I was returning, her husband came to meet me, and with the greatest satisfaction declared that the life of his wife had been saved by drinking the tea.” So successful was the evacuation by the kidneys that Henry had to antidote the cathartic influence on the bowels with an anodyne—that is, an opiate, to mildly paralyze the colon.

Cleavers also acts on the nervous system. This could be guessed from the fact that the ripe seed heads contain caffeine. From the standpoint of the doctrine of signatures there is also the point that the long, slender stems with little seed heads on the end look like nerves with their terminal nerve bulbs. These little swollen bulbs look a lot like the swellings on the skin caused by neurofibromatosis. These signatures were pointed out by Tis Mal Crow one day while we were out in my back yard looking at a cleavers patch.

Cleavers is a “deer medicine,” a category in Native American herbalism associated with the nerves. Deer like to sleep in patches

of cleavers (it makes them smell nondeerish) and the doe will sometimes have her fawn in such patches. (I know of two rural persons who had the opportunity to observe this firsthand.) From this, cleavers and bedstraw passed into usage, both in Europe and North America, as a birthing remedy, though Specific Indications: are lacking. I used it once to restore stamina after an exhausting labor. The long, sharp-edged stalks remind one of the finely articulated legs of the deer. These signs indicate that cleavers is beneficial for the nervous system.

Although most herbalists use *Galium* for the lymphatics and kidneys, I have gotten on a different track, using it for the nerves. I have had many remarkable cures and palliations with cleavers in the neurological sphere. It is beneficial in "gatherings of the nerves" and inflammation of the nerve endings (neurofibrositis). It is indicated for oversensitivity of the nerve endings, tickling and itchy skin. It is a specific in Dupuytren's contracture and Morton's neuroma, when the tendons tighten up under the middle fingers or toes. (Here also consider frankincense.) Long after I had confirmed these indications in my own practice I was delighted to find that one of the old authors had discovered the same property. Rolla Thomas, one of the eclectics, notes the specific indication: "nodulated growths or deposits in the skin or mucous membranes."

TASTE:

sweet, earthen • cool and moist • aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, irritation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Sensitive nervous system; skin tickles and itches easily.

- Stagnation of water, in the lymphatics, kidneys, bladder (any or all); poor elimination of effete material; calcifications and fibrous tissue.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervousness, sympathetic excess.
- Fussy, irritated, unsatisfied, “not myself.”

HEAD

- Dry eyes.
- Sore tongue.

LYMPHATICS

- Infectious mononucleosis.
- *Lymphatic swellings under and behind the ears;* in newborn babies.
- Underarm odor.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema, swelling of the hands and feet.
- Bladder infections with fever, heat, and straining; nonspecific cystitis, urethritis extending to kidneys, testicles.
- Passes white sand through the kidneys.
- Cloudy urine.

FEMALE

- *Fibrocystic breasts with many cysts, fibrous tissue*.

MALE

- Male sexual system; prostate inflamed, enlarged, difficulty passing water; hydrocele, orchitis; after venereal infections.
- Irritability of the vas deferens and seminal vesicles; soreness of the testicles on rising.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Neurological disease; Dupuytren's contracture, Morton's neuroma (gathering of nerves under middle fingers and toes), swollen and hot.
- Cramps up legs, walks with a limp (cf. *Vinca*).

SKIN

- Skin eruptions; febrile exanthema, scarlet fever.
- "Nodulated growths or deposits in the skin or mucous membranes."

OTHER

- Epilepsy.
- Bleeding (cf. *Galium verum*).
- Cancer. "It is of great service in cancer. Give tincture 30 to 60 drops mixed with milk, four times a day, and see the miracle" (Yadubir Sinha).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The stems should be collected in the spring and early summer, when they still have a vanilla-like flavor, before the seeds appear, and should be preserved fresh in alcohol—brandy brings out the sweetness. Dose of the tincture: 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day. If picked for use as a tea it must be dried immediately to prevent the flowers from going to seed and to preserve the sweet taste and the medicinal properties. One method is to pick it on a hot day and dry it in a hot greenhouse (Matthias and Andrea Reisen). It should be decocted in cold water all night because hot water dissipates its virtue (John Skelton). The ripened seeds can be roasted to make a coffee that is equivalent to the genuine article (Maude Grieve)—*est probatum* (Matthew Wood). In long-term buildup of fibrous tissue, cleavers may need to be persisted in for a year or longer, though immediate results will be evident. Sometimes it will only palliate.

CAUTIONS:

Cleavers is considered to be entirely nontoxic.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Matthew Wood (1–5, 14, 17, 20), A. W. and L. R. Priest (19), Maude Grieve (3), Dorothy Hall (15, 16), Christopher Menzies-Trull (6, 7, 9, 15, 16), Edwin Hale (homeopathic uses), Gideon Lincecum (Indian uses), Maria Treben (21), Julia Graves (12, 13), David Winston (18), Yadubir Sinha (23), Rolla Thomas (20).

Galium odoratum. Sweet Woodruff.

This little bedstraw is native to woodland in Europe, but can be grown as an ornamental and is naturalized in North America. It has an ancient, rather than modern, reputation in medicine, and is known as a "witch's remedy." In Germany it is called waldmeister, *or "master of the woods," presumably in reference to its occult powers. It has a sweet, aromatic scent that betrays the presence of coumarins, also found in other members of this family. In addition it contains flavonoids, anthraquinones, tannins, and iridoid alkaloids*.

As a blood thinner, sweet woodruff breaks up blood stagnation resulting in varicose veins, phlebitis, and thrombophlebitis. It probably also acts through the liver by decongesting the venous blood supply, which is double in this organ (portal circulation to bring in toxic blood as well as the regular venous drainage). Hence, it is used in hepatic pain, biliary obstruction, jaundice, gallstones, constipation, diarrhea, and indigestion. Here a poultice is traditionally used on the liver and gallbladder. It is also beneficial for renal colic, kidney stones, and menstrual congestion and cramping. As a nervine (cf. *Galium aparine*) it is beneficial for menstrual cramps, panic, insomnia, restlessness, neuralgia,

paralysis, migraine, and itching skin, and for wounds and cuts. It increases milk flow.

Galium verum. Lady's Bedstraw, Yellow Bedstraw.

Properties are similar to cleavers *(Galium aparine)* and sweet woodruff *(Galium odoratum)*. John Hill (1740, 84) writes, "This herb is little regarded, but it has very great virtue; it should be gathered when the flowers are not quite blown, and dried in the shade. An infusion of it will cure the most violent bleedings at the nose, and almost all other evacuations of blood."

Ganoderma lucidum, G. tsugae. Reishi Mushroom.

The ling zhi mushroom (G. lucidum), *native to Asia, has been introduced into Western herbalism from traditional Chinese medicine in the last thirty years. It is best known by its Japanese name, reishi. One common North American species*, G. applanatum, *is popularly known as "artist's conk." The most popular and spectacular of the North American ganodermas is* G. tsugae. *All members of this family can be used interchangeably, although commerce prefers the first and last*.

The Chinese name ling zhi *is derived from the pictographs for "shaman praying for rain"* (ling) *and "tree fungus" or "substance used to concoct an elixir of immortality"* (zhi).

Ganoderma is a very important addition to the Western herbal pharmacopoeia, so I have included it despite my general prohibition against mushrooms in this book. It contains polysaccharides, phytosterols, terpenes and triterpenes, and protein (adenosine, a component in the ATP cycle). It reduces autoimmune excess (heat), but also builds up exhausted, cold people, rebuilds the adrenal cortex, regulates blood clotting, and protects the liver.

Ganoderma tsugae *is a beautiful sight to behold under any conditions, but my friend Christine Dennis, herbalist (OHA), of Port Burwell, Ontario, related an especially remarkable sighting. She and her father came across a rotted but still standing hemlock tree in the forest*

covered with dozens of reishis (G. tsugae). *The beams of the setting sun ran through millions of golden red spores that burst out from the fungi in a rhythmic pulsation. "The mushroom is breathing," exclaimed her father. Perhaps it was some such sighting that inspired the shamans to make their elixir of immortality*.

Reishi is a tonic to the parasympathetic side of the nervous system (rest, relax, eat, digest, sleep, dream), and to the adrenal cortex—the "fat of the kidneys" that supports parasympathetic function. More particularly, it balances and builds the "pro-inflammatory" side of the adrenal cortex—that is, the "mineralocorticoid" side that supports the inflammatory side of the immune response. It does not act on the "anti-inflammatory" or glucocorticoid side, which suppresses the immune response. Thus, it reduces autoimmune excess. Don Babineau, who has collected more of the golden red *Ganoderma tsugae* than anyone I know, says, "It looks like fire and it restores fire to the system."

TASTE:

meaty, salty

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Sympathetic excess; nervous exhaustion; adrenal burnout.
- Allergies.
- Hypertension; inhibits cholesterol synthesis.
- Congealed blood; inhibits clot formation, platelet aggregation.
- Nerves and muscles; pain, spasm.

- Chronic degenerative conditions.
- Arthritis.
- Myasthenia gravis.
- Autoimmune disease; Sjögren's syndrome.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Although *Ganoderma lucidum* is the officinale species in the Chinese pharmacopoeia, several species grow elsewhere that can be used in its stead: *G. oregonense, G. applanatum, G. tsugae, G. capense, G. japonicum*. The officinale reishi grows on oaks and chestnuts. I have seen it growing on oak trees along busy streets in New York City. *G. tsugae* grows on hemlocks *(tsuga)* and the *applanatum* on maples.

The whole fruiting body is used. It requires hot water to release some of the active ingredients, so reishi is frequently cooked for an hour, then preserved in tincture, used as a tea, or combined with a good stock containing soup bones and tonic herbs and frozen for future use. Dose of the tincture: 1 teaspoon, 1–3x/day. Dose of the decoction: 1/10 ounce per cup to 2 ounces per quart, 3x/day. Many people prefer processed products in order to ensure the proper content of active ingredients in the mushroom.

CAUTIONS:

Regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional Chinese medicine, Christopher Hobbs, Terry Willard, Kate Gilday, and Don Babineau.

Gentiana lutea, Gentiana sp. Gentian.

The officinal gentian (G. lutea) *is native to high meadows in Europe and Asia. It has many cousins, all of whom are very bitter, and are used interchangeably*. Gentiana lutea *contains iridoid monoterpenes (bitters), sugars, pyridine alkaloids, xanthone derivatives, and traces of volatile oils*.

Gentian is an intense bitter that stimulates the taste glands, appetite, digestive secretions, and bile production. Through stimulation it strengthens the innervations of the enteric brain, or autonomic nervous system presiding over the digestive tract and gallbladder. It has long been used to stimulate secretion of digestive enzymes, hydrochloric acid, and bile. "It is the great bitter and stomachic of the modern practice," noted Sir John Hill (1740, 188); the taste is improved by combination with dried orange peel. Closer to our time, John William Fyfe (1909, 551) writes, "Gentian is an excellent stomach bitter. It increases the appetite and aids digestion, accelerates the blood current, and acts generally as a stimulant and tonic. It constitutes a medicament of usefulness in debilitated conditions generally, and through its corrective influence the stomach and bowels are often brought up to a normal state. Slow and feeble digestion are often improved by this agent, and in fermentative dyspepsia it is employed with much advantage."

Gentian was much used as a medicament in intermittent fever or chills alternating with fever. This condition is usually associated with malaria, though today when it appears it is merely a symptom of influenza. The alternating chills and fever weaken the autonomic nervous system, through which the chill is conducted, leading to exhaustion of the other centers governed by the autonomic—the digestive tract and gallbladder. Hence it is an old remedy in weakness of the digestion. William Cullen, the great eighteenth-century writer on materia medica, "never knew it to fail in intermittents" when given with an astringent like oak gall or tormentil (Eberle, 1834, 1:292). American physicians did not find gentian reliable in this condition generally, but there is a

considerable difference in climate between Scotland and eastern North America.

Dr. John Eberle (1834, 1:292) gives Specific Indications: and contraindications for the constitution that benefits or regresses under the influence of gentian. I do not know if these indications originate with him; probably they are much older, for they resemble Greek medical concepts. “Persons of an irritable or excitable habit of body, or of a sanguineous temperament, do not, in general, bear the gentian so well as the columba, from its greater tendency to heat and irritate the general system.” However, it is indicated in persons who are “torpid” and “phlegmatic,” with a “torpid and debilitated state of the digestive organs.”

Dr. Edward Bach introduced gentian flower essence for people who are making progress, then suffer a setback and doubt their remedy, the healer, and so on. This valuable indication works for the flower essence, the herb, or the homeopathic preparation. In another instance, when the client starts to ask repeatedly if the remedy is going to work, and needs continual reassurance—even when they already feel better—give gentian. Most irritating are the people who back off when the gut-level instinct of the healer kicks in and is certain about the approach. Give the remedy then and there to reassure these autonomically challenged individuals (Matthew Wood, Jeanne Ohearn).

The person needing this remedy shows an inability to connect with their gut-level instincts. They mistrust their instincts so they worry and look for confirmation from outside sources but usually jump to the wrong conclusion because they mistrust themselves. Later on this inability to connect with life makes them feel discouraged and depressed, as well as doubt-ridden and uncertain. Sometimes they feel outright panic, hence it is serviceable in anaphylactic shock. It is also suited to stronger people who try to stir up emotions, create anger, and get other people to doubt their own instincts (Edward Bach, Dorothy Hall, Matthew Wood). In Appalachia a piece of gentian root is carried to increase energy and strength (Jack Ritchason, 1995, 95). This is an appropriate usage if

one understands the affinity of the plant for the autonomic and the gut-level instincts, from which energy and strength arise.

Samuel Henry (1814, 140) used "American gentian" or horse gentian *(Triosteum perfoliatum)* as a substitute for the European. Other American gentians, especially *Sabatia*, were used by other physicians.

TASTE:

bitter, acrid

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, atrophy, torpor

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Persons who doubt themselves*.
- *Torpid, phlegmatic persons, with stagnant, debilitated digestion*.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Persons who do not trust their gut-level instincts; afraid to follow instincts, the advice of the therapist*.
- *Hysteria, panic, anaphylactic shock*.
- Lack of faith, discouragement.
- *Patient is recovering, but experiences a setback and becomes nervous, doubtful, and discouraged*.
- Intense anger; wants to upset and discourage others.

DIGESTION

- *Acute gastrointestinal inflammation; jaundice, diarrhea, dysentery*.
- *Lack of appetite; digestion slow or feeble; food lies heavy on the stomach; heartburn; gas; constipation; worms*.

- *Atonic dyspepsia, with mental and physical depression, general debility, and exhaustion.*
- Anal itch.
- *Intermittent fever; with jaundice, diarrhea.*
- "*Sense of depression referred to epigastric region, and associated with sense of physical and mental weariness"* (1–5 drops) (Rolla Thomas).

FEMALE

- Vaginal rashes and discharges.

OTHER

- Increases secretion and assimilation in the aged and convalescent.
- Convulsions.
- Bee stings with anaphylactic shock (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The root is used as a tea, tincture, or extract in diluted or very small doses because of its intense bitterness. It is often combined with other substances to lessen the taste. For example, one-quarter ounce each of orange peel, quinine bark, liquorice root, gentian root, and cloves, pour over them a pint and a half of boiling water, and steep until cold. Strain off and preserve. Dose: 1 tablespoonful 3x/day. "The author has cured many cases of dyspepsia with this remedy after others had failed" (Slack, 1919, 115).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (8–10, 12, 15, 17), John Eberle (2), Edward Bach (1, 3–6), Matthew Wood (1–6, confirmed), Matthew Becker (7), John William Fyfe (8–10), Rolla Thomas (13), Sebastian Kneipp (9), Jack Ritchason (4, 9, 11, 14).

Geranium robertianum. Herb Robert.

This small member of the cranesbill clan is native to Europe and naturalized (or possibly even native) to New England and the eastern Canadian shield. It has properties similar to *Geranium maculatum*. John Hill (1740, 139) comments, "It is to be observed that Nature seems to have set her stamp upon several herbs which have the virtue to stop bleedings; this and the tu[t]san *[Hypericum androsaemum]*. The two best remedies the fields afford for outward and inward bleedings, become all over as red as blood at a certain season."

Geum urbanum. Common Avens, City Avens.

Avens was one of the great herbs of European folk tradition, used not only as a medicine but as a protection against evil spirits and moths and even as a model for architectural devices found in medieval churches. This usage indicates that avens was thought to possess spiritual and occult properties. Geum urbanum *is a common, scruffy, weedy representative of the genus, habituated to cities, that has spread from Europe to North America and elsewhere. The root has an aromatic smell and taste like its wild American cousin,* G. rivale. *It is traditionally classified as an astringent, nutritive tonic, antiseptic, and antiperiodic*.

"In modern herbal medicine avens is considered useful in diarrhea, dysenteries, leucorrhea, sore throat, ague, chills, fresh catarrh, intermittent fevers, chronic and passive hemorrhages, gastric irritation, and headache," writes Maude Grieve (1931, 74). Some of these indications are confirmed and enlarged by Nalda Gosling (1981, 26). It is used in ulcerative and catarrhal colitis in combination with agrimony—a *Rosaceae* cousin with many of the same powers. The hot infusion is considered appropriate in the early stages of influenza, with runny mucus and loose diarrhea (cf. another cousin, *Rubus canadensis*). The cold infusion is taken for debility and lack of appetite after an exhaustive influenza. It

promotes appetite and assimilation (cf. *Rubus canadensis*) and probably autonomic timing and strength (cf. *Agrimonia*).

To continue with Maude Grieve: “The infusion is considered an excellent cordial sudorific at the commencement of chills and catarrh, cutting short the paroxysm, and the continued use of it has restorative power in weakness, debility, etc. Its astringency makes it useful in diarrhea, sore throat, etc. It is taken, strained and cold, in wineglassful doses, three or four times a day.

“The powdered root has been used both in America and Europe as a substitute for Peruvian bark and has frequently been found to cure agues when the latter has failed.” The use of agrimony, potentilla, and avens for malarial agues is very ancient. John Hill (1740, 68) testifies, “I have known [avens] alone to cure intermittent fevers, where the [quinine] bark has been unsuccessful.” And in America, Samuel Henry (1814, 26) called *Geum urbanum* “really an excellent substitute for the Jesuit bark [quinine], in the cure of intermittent fevers, dysentery, chronic diarrhoaes, wind colic, affections of the stomach, asthmatic symptoms, and cases of debility.” He uses it between the chills. Michael Moore (2003, 40) calls *Geum spp*. “one of our better dysentery remedies.”

TASTE:

sweet, pungent • astringent

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Laryngitis, pharyngitis.
- Influenza with free secretion of mucus and loose stools.
- Exhaustion after influenza.

DIGESTION

- Aphthous ulcers (canker sores) (cf. *Agrimonia, Rubus, Rhus typhina, Rosa, Salvia, Hydrastis, Coptis, Geum triflorum*).
- Gingivitis, halitosis.
- Peptic ulcer, dyspepsia.
- *Diarrhea, dysentery;* enteritis, colitis, ulcerative colitis, hemorrhoids.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Cystitis.

FEMALE

- Vaginal discharge.
- Menorrhagia.

OTHER

- Intermittent fever; epidemic fever.
- Insect bites.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Grieve (1931, 74) relates an old custom, probably dating from the period when avens was considered to have occult properties. “The root should be dug up in spring; some of the old physicians were so particular on this point that the 25th March was fixed for procuring the root (and it was specified that the soil should be dry). At this time the root was said to be most fragrant. It loses much of its odor in drying, so must be dried with great care, and gradually, then sliced and powdered as required, as they are less likely to lose their properties in this form than when kept in slices.” March 25 was the ancient New Year’s Day. In the north the ground is still often covered with snow and no avens would be visible.

“The infusion or decoction is made from 1/2 oz. of the powdered root or herb to 1 pint of boiling water, strained and taken cold. The

infusion is the most grateful, but the decoction may be made much stronger by boiling it down to half. The simple tincture is made by pouring a pint of proof spirit on an ounce of the bruised root and macerating it for fourteen days and then filtering through paper. Two or three teaspoonfuls of this tincture in any water vehicle, or in a glass of wine, are a sufficient dose."

CAUTIONS:

All the avens are generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Christopher Menzies-Trull (1, 4–12), Maude Grieve (2, 3, 7, 11), Nalda Gosling (2, 3, 7), Michael Moore (6, 7, 9, 10).

Glechoma hederacea. Ground Ivy, Creeping Charley.

Ground ivy is native to Europe, but widely naturalized in temperate North America. It contains volatile oils, sesquiterpenes, hydroxy fatty acids, caffeic acid derivatives, flavonoids, and minerals (iron, copper, iodine, phosphorus, and potassium).

Considering how little we use ground ivy today it is interesting to note Dr. John Quincy's comment in the 1736 *London Pharmacopoeia* that it is "mightily used both in the Shops and common Prescriptions" and is "prescribed in almost all Distempers of the Lungs." Alma Hutchins (1992, 1) calls it "one of the most wonderful of all herbs."

Ground ivy has been traditionally used as a remedy for the inner ear—humming sounds, ringing noises, and hardness of hearing (Gerard, 1633). This usage has been confirmed in modern times. *Glechoma* also seems to act on the middle ear. It is effective in head colds, when the tubes of the middle ears are involved, or in any chronic respiratory congestion where the problem began with blockage in the Eustachian tubes. This indication was discovered by myself and Lise Wolff, herbalist (AHG), who also adds that there may be a kidney weakness associated with the pattern. I treated one case of chronic bronchitis in a fifty-six-year-old woman that she dated to a middle ear infection beginning at age eight. It took a month and a half under *Glechoma*, but the bronchitis completely cleared up and has not returned in five years. An older author who seems to have been thinking along the same lines was Donald Law (1973, 26): “The juice can be used to wash out the ears.” And Alma Hutchins (1992, 1) says, “The fresh juice snuffed up the nose often takes care of most deep-rooted, long-established headaches.”

The latter author considers it useful in GI problems, where there are griping pains and gas, sores in the mouth (gargle), and in

jaundice from stoppage of the gallbladder or liver, and congestion of the spleen and lymphatics. “It also regulates the heartbeat by making the blood more fluid.” She also recommends it in nervous problems like sciatica, hip gout, arthritis of the hands and knees, and in endocrine conditions, like premature aging.

W. T. Fernie (1914, 228) notes, “In the *Organic Materia Medica* of Detroit, U.S.A., 1890, it is stated, ‘Painters use the ground ivy *(Nepeta glechoma)* as a remedy for, and a preventative of lead colic.’ ” (This is a discarded botanical name.) Maude Grieve (1931) picked this up, and Euell Gibbons mentioned it. Contemporary herbalists such as Kate Gilday and David Winston have confirmed this use in practice. There is speculation and some experience to suggest that it removes other heavy metals such as mercury, and perhaps petrochemical pollutants as well.

Ground ivy is a traditional cancer remedy. The plant in late spring or early summer is covered by weird growths that look like cancerous tumors, though they are actually insect damage. I consider it indicated in cancer cases when the tongue looks like “chopped meat” in the middle—that is, when heat is disorganizing the tissues.

TASTE:

acrid, bitter, “metallic” • cool, dry • aromatic

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Depression.

HEAD

- Headache.
- Styes, sore eyes (external).
- Deafness (external, in ears).
- Mouth ulcers.

RESPIRATION

- *Acute head colds; especially with congestion in the tubes of the ear, middle ear infection*.
- Nasal congestion.
- *Chronic respiratory problems, congestion in the lungs;* especially when there has been middle ear congestion.
- Hot, wet coughs, with bubbling in the chest; it can aggravate other coughs.

DIGESTION

- Dyspepsia.
- Gastrointestinal catarrh.
- Colic, bloating, gas.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- "Bloody and foul urine."

FEVER

- Spasms resulting from fever.

SKIN

- Abscesses, tumors, gatherings.
- Skin eruptions, scurvy (external).

OTHER

- Cancer and diseases of intense heat; when the tongue is dark red in the center, red elsewhere, the center breaking up like "beefsteak."
- *Pulls out the soft heavy metals such as lead, mercury, aluminum*.
- Babies; teething, colic, spasms, restlessness (decoction every few minutes until child is quiet).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The herb can be picked any time of the year, even pried out of the snow, but it is probably at its peak during flowering, in May and June. Dr. John Christopher recommends an infusion of the dried herb, 1 ounce to 1 pint of water, sweetened with honey, and drunk cold, as a cooling beverage. The leaves, stems, and flowers are easily extracted fresh in alcohol. Dose of the tincture, 3–30 drops.

CAUTIONS:

Generally regarded as safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Tommie Bass (1, 2, 3), Samuel Henry (2), Alma Hutchins (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 15), John Christopher (3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18), Lise Wolff (6, 8), Maude Grieve (14, 18), Thomas Fleming, Ralph Russell (12, 19), John Hill (13), Euell Gibbons (18), Kate Gilday (18), W. T. Fernie (18), David Winston (9, 18), Matthew Wood (6 and 8-confirmed, 17).

Glycyrrhiza glabra. Liquorice.

“Its virtues are very great,” writes Sir John Hill (1740, 237). Liquorice has been an important staple of the apothecary trade and herbal medicine in the Orient and the West for many centuries. The sweet taste masks the flavor of other agents. It was also thought to help disparate ingredients mix together more uniformly in a compound prescription. It is a sweet mucilage that is useful for lubricating, cooling, and sedating the mucosa in coughs and stomach ulcers. Modern research demonstrates that liquorice contains steroids that enhance the operation of the adrenal cortex. It is used to enhance the effect of cortisone, but it also enhances aldosterone and can therefore lead to high blood pressure, and a saltier, drier, hotter system, if one is not careful.

CAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Not to be used when high blood pressure is present.

Gnaphalium uliginosum. Marsh Everlasting, Marsh Cudweed.

This everlasting is native to Russia and North America, but was only used in the Old World, the more interesting rabbit tobacco taking its place in the New World. Marsh everlasting was used by Russian folk healers for many hundreds of years before attracting the attention of Soviet doctors in the 1930s. It is the best researched of the everlastings from the scientific standpoint.

No plant I am aware of makes such an immediate impression upon the throat as sweet everlasting. In this it is similar to *Agastache* (anise hyssop), which makes such a marked impression on the nose and sinuses. The throat is warmed, stimulated, astringed, and yet slightly favored with a mucilaginous coat. Cudweed has long been a traditional remedy for quinsy or tonsillitis and sore throat. Plinius mentions this use. It remains to this day a folk remedy for sore throat in Kent, England, where it abounds, according to my friend Anita Ralph, MNIMH.

Although marsh everlasting never achieved widespread popularity in European medicine, it was an important remedy in Russian folk medicine, where it is known as the Immortal. Modern Russian research has shown it to be well suited to the treatment of hypotonia (passive venous congestion), where the blood collects in the veins, due to a lack of cardiovascular tone, resulting in venous disease, high blood pressure, and stress on the right side of the heart. The loss of potassium with fluids explains many other symptoms such as the neuromuscular spasms.

TASTE:

slightly bitter, sweet, and pungent • warm • astringent, mucilaginous, and aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

depression, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Pale asthmatics
- Nervous excitability, insomnia.
- Headache; specific for migraine.
- *Quinsy, tonsillitis* (gargle).
- *Asthma*.
- Gastrointestinal problems with colic and spasms; internal bleeding from intestine.
- Passive venous congestion; high blood pressure; stenocardia, heart palpitations.
- Diarrhea, dysentery (in vinegar).
- Kidneys; loss of fluids; diabetes.
- Excessive menstrual bleeding.
- Fresh cuts with profuse bleeding.
- Old running sores and ulcers.
- Dermatomycosis.
- Wet eczema.
- Burns; chemical and thermal.
- Balding; to prevent (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The aerial parts or flower tops are collected during flowering (July, August). They need to be carefully dried in the shade to prevent spoilage. They extract well in water, alcohol, and oil. Officinal Russian dosage, infusion: 1 tablespoon (15 grams) to 1 cup (250

ml); steep for 10 minutes, strain. Drink 1 cup, 3x/day. Decoction: 2 tablespoons (30 grams) to 1 cup (250 ml); boil for 15 minutes, cool for 45 minutes, strain. Drink 1/2 cup, 3x/day after meals. May be taken for up to 1–2 months.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dioscorides (8), Plinius (4), Igor Zevin (Russian research and folk usage, 1–16).

Harpagophytum procumbens. Devil's Claw.

This plant is an unusual native of the deserts of southern Africa, where it is a traditional remedy among the Bushmen and adopted into use by the white settlers of the region. The roots look like grappling hooks, or for that matter like the hand of a person afflicted by rheumatoid arthritis, for which this plant is most famous. Devil's claw is used as a bitter tonic for gastrointestinal complaints and as a blood cleanser. It is used mainly for dyspepsia, meteorism, and gallbladder problems with or without pancreatic involvement. It is also used for arthritis, low back pain due to spondylosis, rheumatoid arthritis, neuralgia, and headache. It relieves pain and improves mobility in the joints. It has also reduced cholesterol, triglycerides, and obesity. Devil's claw contains iridoid glycosides, phytosterols, unsaturated fatty acids, triterpenes, flavonoids, and free acids (Rudolf Weiss, 1988, 266).

Hepatica spp. Liverwort.

Hepatica *grows in shady woods in the northern temperate region. It has a slight history of use in European medicine. It was not much used in America, but enormous amounts passed through herbal commerce in the nineteenth century, so it probably was an ingredient in some patent*

medicine. Although it must have been overpicked, it is still a common wildflower. Let us not, however, overpick it again.

Dr. John Quincy (1736, 138) gives a good account of the European species in his *London Pharmacopoeia*. It "grows near springs, wells, and watery places, very low, almost like a moss, and puts out flowers about June, not unlike stars. This is wonderfully commended by Schrader, in those disorders of the liver which arise from too much heat; and he says 'tis good in the jaundice, hectics, gonorrheas, and fevers." This describes conditions not unlike hepatitis. "Some are fond of it because of the resemblance it bears to the liver and spleen in its leaves, but that signature philosophy is now exploded. It is not much in the shop dispensations; but frequently prescribed in antiscorbutic and medicinal ales and drinks in spring time." It is little used today in European medicine, if at all.

Hibiscus spp.

Hibiscus flowers have long been used in Middle Eastern and Ayurvedic medicine. They are high in vitamin C and are used for colds and flus. They also act on internal organs, especially where heat is bothering the kidneys and genitals. The flowers are used to make a sour, cooling tea in the summer (sometimes combined with rose hips). The hibiscus is considered a sacred plant in India.

TASTE:

sour

TISSUE STATE:

irritation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Irritation of the arteries and capillaries.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- In women who don't feel good with their sexuality (flower essence).

RESPIRATION

- Colds, flus, coughs, and fevers.

DIGESTION

- Overheated liver, stomach.
- Diarrhea from an irritated colon.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema from hot, congested kidneys.
- Painful urination; cystitis.

FEMALE

- *Uterine irritation and bleeding; menorrhagia*.
- *Dysmenorrhea; cramping with bleeding*.

OTHER

- Venereal diseases; toxins in the blood.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The dried flowers are used by infusion or tincture.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Flower Essence Society (2), Vasant Lad and David Frawley (3, 5, 7, 9, 10), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (3, 4, 6, 7, 8).

Humulus lupulus. Hops.

Hops is a vine native to Europe but grown and naturalized in North America. It is a member of the marijuana family. The female flower (strobile) contains bitters (up to 30%), tannins, ammonia (hence the "urinous" smell), and volatile oils. The fruits contain resins, pectin, tannins, bitters, volatile oils, and rutin. The bitter strobiles have been used since the Protestant Reformation to flavor beer.

Hops has an intense acrid/bitter flavor, indicating that it is relaxant and antispasmodic. It also possesses a salty flavor that suggests an affinity to the water/solid balance in the kidneys. On drying, acrid valeric acid develops, so the properties of hops are related to valerian—that is, it is a smooth muscle relaxant. It is suited to conditions where there is sleeplessness, pain, twitching, and tremors associated with exhaustion from mental, emotional, and nervous strain and overexcitement. "Hops have five basic effects on the body," writes herbalist Michael Moore (2003, 133). "As a sedative, bitter tonic, antispasmodic, anodyne, and antibiotic."

The use of a hops pillow for insomnia "was regarded as superstitious nonsense until a physician prescribed a hop pillow for King George III in 1787 with excellent results," writes Richard Lucas (1981, 131). "The hop pillow has proved to be of remarkable value for tense, nervous people who are unable to sleep." Abraham Lincoln also used the hops pillow.

Hops is suited to people with intense personalities and drives, mental strain, and strong emotions (hatred, anger), the overexercise of which results in nervous exhaustion, nervousness, insomnia, and worry. The person is too strong above, and too weak below (cf. *Verbena, Capsella*).

Daniel Gagnon, herbalist (AHG), characterizes hops as a remedy for "the abused stomach." Michael Moore (2003) relates it to the "nervous stomach." It normalizes the secretions, whether too high or low (cf. meadowsweet). Half a beer, roughly, increases digestive secretions, whereas a whole beer decreases them. When gastric secretions are diminished, food does not digest well, the head pounds, and a person can't sleep.

"Its chief field of action, however, is to allay irritation associated with wrongs of the male reproductive organs. It is frequently of service in cystic irritation, causing frequent urination, and is quite efficient in chordee. It has long been valued in nocturnal seminal emissions, being one of the few agents which actually do good service in that affection" (Frederick Locke, 1895).

Hops is used by fomentation or hot poultice on boils, skin irritations, spasms, and especially pain of the lower back. It can be used in a bath before bed, to reduce insomnia, especially in people who find the smell of the hops pillow repulsive (Michael Moore, 2003).

TASTE:

acrid, bitter, salty

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Red face; flushed face*.
- Active cerebral hyperemia.
- Overexcitement leads to nervous exhaustion, debility, neurasthenia, and pain.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Personality “very intense.”
- “Blows up” easily with anger.
- Mental strain, worry.
- *Mental excitement, nervousness, wakefulness, sexual preoccupation, anger*, hysteria, alternating with drowsiness, sleepiness, dullness, heavy head.
- Tremors, twitching, tension; with heat and nervous exhaustion.
- Delirium tremens, mild attacks.
- Insomnia (hops pillow, bath).
- Agoraphobia.
- Chest pain, with anxiety.

HEAD

- Toothache.
- *Nervous headaches, facial pain, cerebral hyperemia*, earache, occipital headache.

RESPIRATION

- Strep throat, middle ear infection, earache (alcohol soluble parts).
- Bronchitis, whooping cough.

DIGESTION

- Lack of appetite, lack of saliva and digestive juices.
- Appetite excessive; bolts their food, big bites.
- Emotions (hate, anger) and nervousness cause stomach acidity, indigestion, diarrhea.
- Stomach; exhaustion, irritation, indigestion, flatulence, gastritis.
- Intestines; flatulent colic; colic of children.
- Dyspepsia due to faulty starch digestion; after a meal food ferments instead of digesting; with restlessness and brooding over troubles.
- Mucus colitis; slack, free secreting bowels with lack of tension; fermentation, unpleasant eructations.
- Tension blocking digestion; hot, tense, irritated, dry conditions in the gastrointestinal tract; abdominal cramping; irritable bowel syndrome.
- “Dyspepsia, with restlessness and a disposition to brood over troubles” (Scudder).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallstone colic; with jaundice, spasm, pain.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema.
- Urinary incontinence; nocturnal emission; priapism.
- Tension in bladder or uterus; excessive sexual desire, bedwetting, and nocturnal emissions; calculi.
- Cystitis, with irritation, frequent urination.

FEMALE

- Dysmenorrhea; painful uterine affections.
- Female sexual irritation.
- Parturition: a bottle of hopped beer before delivery is used to calm the mother (not to be used during pregnancy).
- Lactation: brings down the milk.
- Lactation: mastitis.
- Menopause.

MALE

- Male sexual irritation; nocturnal emissions; excessive desire; premature ejaculation; excessive preoccupation; priapism; acute prostatic disease.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscular tension, drawing pains, and twitching.
- Backaches and menstrual pains of the neurasthenic.

SKIN

- Abscess; to ease the pain and bring them to a head (external).

FEVER

- High fever with nervous excitement and tendencies to delirium.

PREPARATION, CONTRAINDICATIONS, AND DOSAGE:

Dorothy Hall (1988, 183–88) should be consulted for a description of the important differences that occur depending on the treatment of the hops. Generally, the longer the drying, the more relaxing it becomes to the nervous system, whereas the shorter the drying the more bitter and stomachic it will be. Dosage can also change the action. “Small doses are advised in nervous anxiety while larger doses in insomnia and where sedation is required” (Menzies-Trull, 2003, 651).

CAUTIONS:

Food use, generally regarded as safe in small doses, but prolonged use of hopped beer may have deleterious effects.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dorothy Hall, John William Fyfe (7–9, 14, 17, 20–21, 31, 33, 34, 37), Kim Dudley (4, 11, 12), William Boericke, John Scudder (22, 23, 25), Frederick Locke (3, 8, 31, 39), Daniel Gagnon (14), Brent Davis (23), Paul Bergner (1), Matthew Alfs (5, 7, 18, 19), R. Swinburne Clymer (37), Louise Tenney (14, 16, 25–28, 41), Ina May Gaskin (33), Christopher Menzies-Trull (2, 6, 8, 10, 13, 19, 26, 31, 34–38), Thomas Reilly (3, 7, 14, 21, 29, 31, 37, 39). An important paper was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (1906) by Dr. Thomas C. Reilly, of New York City.

Hypericum androsaemum. Tutsan.

"A very singular and beautiful plant, and of great virtues," writes Sir John Hill (1740, 375). "It grows in our woods and under hedges, but not very common: It is kept in many gardens" in Great Britain. "The whole plant, in autumn, frequently appears of a blood-red color." This may have suggested its use as a wound remedy. "The leaves are an excellent cure for fresh wounds. Scarce any thing is equal to them. The young and tender ones at the tops of the branches are to be chosen; they are bound upon the wound, and they stop the bleeding, and perform a very speedy cure. I have had very late and very singular instances of the effects of this herb. Many of the common plants are celebrated for this virtue, but the effects of this is surprising."

Hypericum perforatum. St. John's Wort.

St. John's wort is a native of Europe, where it has probably been used since prehistoric times as a medicine and religious plant. It has long been associated with the little people, fairies, witches, saints, and others. It is an important wound medicine. Of late it has attracted interest as an antidepressant.

The taste of St. John's wort is difficult to define but it is certainly sweet, oily, warm, and dry. It definitely qualifies as "balsamic"—that is, an oily plant with volatile oils that are soothing, calming, and curative. As a sweet, oily tonic it improves digestion and metabolism. It builds tissue tone, helps the liver process complex toxins (including pharmaceutical drugs), and slightly strengthens the eliminative faculties—skin, kidneys, colon, and lungs. It is a stomach normalizer applicable in both hyperacidity and hypoacidity. It is suited to weakness of the digestive nerve reflexes

and the enteric brain, or animal instincts in the gut. Like other balsams (cf. *Melissa*), St. John's wort has a powerful effect on the nervous system. It is best known as a first aid remedy for injuries to nerves—and is suited to injuries to parts rich in nerves (eye, fingertips, spine) where there are sharp, shooting pains, inflammation along nerves, acute sensitivity and pain, blood poisoning from injuries to fingers and toes (red stripes up the extremities), and clonic spasms and convulsions from inflamed nerves. Hypericum was considered a specific for tetanic convulsions in homeopathy. It is one of the most important herbal pain-relievers. (If it does not work, try *Xanthoxylum*, which is suited to even more intense, tormenting pain.)

St. John's wort is much used in the traditional medicine of central and eastern Europe. It is a fixture of Russian herbalism and medicine (which are not separate in that country). Russian indications are therefore extensive. It is considered to be a "liver remedy" and thus a "detoxifier." We get some of these indications from Alma Hutchins and Fred Siciliano, OMD. The latter studied with Sydney Yudin, a Russian trained doctor of botanical medicine. Hypericum with Aloe powder (the purgative) is a deep detoxifier, according to Hutchins (1992, 258). Watch the urine: "Whole flakes of morbid matter are sometimes washed away with it." St. John's wort is particularly called for in cases where the innervations of the digestive tract, the autonomic, are weak and there is tension from a toxic liver—"liver overpowering the spleen" (Siciliano).

St. John's wort and wood betony were the two most important remedies for psychiatric problems in the Middle Ages—what were then called the ill-effects of witchcraft and demons. Both plants strengthen the enteric brain, seat of the instincts, and it is in this manner that they "drive away evil influences"—the person gets stronger, so as not to fall under the domination of untoward people. Today, *Hypericum* is used for depression and anxiety. The exact mechanisms are uncertain, but it does not seem to be an MAO inhibitor.

St. John's wort has taken a long time to become a popular herb in America. Samuel Henry (1814, 248), an early botanical practitioner

of New York City, used St. John's wort for "promoting urine, curing of ulcers, immoderate flowings of the menses, diarrhea, remove lowness of spirits, helps hysterical, hypochondriac, and maniacal disorders." However, it did not catch on until introduced through homeopathic sources, when it was used as a wound remedy for injuries involving nerves. Then it attracted attention, early in the AIDS crisis, as a remedy for retroviruses. It was catapulted to fame as a remedy for mild depression, however—note Henry's mention of "lowness of spirits." It is widely used for this at present, despite attempts to discredit it and falsely suggest that it is an MAO inhibitor that interacts with blood pressure.

William LeSassier saw St. John's wort as a "bladder relaxer." It is for "emotions that influence the bladder. Over urination; burning, hot urine; stressful; easily scared; adrenal overwork."

TASTE:

sweet, oily • warm and dry • balsamic

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, constriction, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Anxiety, depression, hysteria, insomnia.
- Insomnia in children afraid of the dark.
- Depression in the wintertime.
- Weakness of gut-level instincts, inability to trust instincts.
- Frail, older people, discouraged, depressed, in pain.
- Chronic fatigue, mental burnout.

HEAD, BRAIN, SPINE

- Concussion to brain or spine; like “fireworks in front of your eyes.”
- Meningitis; stiff neck.
- Gum disease, offensive breath (mouthwash, 1 tablespoonful/cup, simmer 10 minutes, cool, strain, gargle before meals, 3x/day).

RESPIRATION

- Cough, bronchitis.
- Bleeding from the lungs, tuberculosis, anemia.
- Whooping cough.
- Asthma.
- Phlegm (tea).

DIGESTION

- Irritated but weak digestion.
- Stomach normalizer; hyperacidity and hypoacidity.
- Stomach, acute and chronic disorders, gastroenteritis.
- Anemia, weakness of appetite, malnutrition, weakness.
- Diarrhea, dysentery.
- Hemorrhoids; painful, inflamed.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Liver weakness.
- Jaundice.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Stress, emotions, fear, tension, influencing the bladder.
- Excessive urination; burning, hot urine.
- Bedwetting (1/2 teaspoonful/cup, steep 1 hour, every night before bed).
- Suppressed urine.
- Ulcerations of the urinary tract.
- Pus in the urine.

LYMPH/IMMUNE

- Scrofula (swollen glands), damaged immunity.

FEMALE

- Menstruation; painful, irregular, uterine cramps.
- Menstruation; excessive bleeding.
- Postpartum: afterbirth pains, coccygeal pains.
- Breasts; swollen, hard tumors.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Paralysis.
- Rheumatism (fibromyalgia).
- Tetanus.

WOUNDS

- Inflammatory processes with acute pain.
- *Injuries to parts rich in nerves, with inflammation, convulsion, spasm, redness, heat, shooting pains, sharp, needle-like pains; injuries attended with great pain.*
- *Sharp, shooting pains along nerves.*
- *Neuralgia, sciatica, pains in the coccyx.*
- *Deep wounds; heals from the inside out.*
- Skin conditions, burns, ulcers, skin tags.
- Corns.
- Boils, carbuncles; with acute pain.
- Radiation burns.

PREPARATION, CONTRAINDICATIONS, AND DOSAGE:

The flowers are picked when they are dry (not moist) from midsummer onward, preferably on a long, hot, dry summer day. They can be used by infusion, tincture, oil, or salve. Can cause sensitivity to light—sunburn.

LITERATURE:

Traditional eastern European remedy, homeopathic sources, Flower Essence Society (2), Matthew Wood (3, 4, 41), Julia Graves (1, 2, 3, 7, 41), Alma Hutchins (7–14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25–29, 31–37, 42–44), Fred Siciliano (15–18, 21), Jack Ritchason (6), William LeSassier (23–24).

Hyssopus officinalis. Hyssop.

Hyssop is a bitter, pungent mint, long used in Mediterranean medicine but easily grown in gardens elsewhere. It is related to or identical with the hyssop of the Bible, of which it is said: "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean." It had economic and social importance as a sacrifice at the Jewish Temple, as a fumigant in pagan ceremonies, and as a household cleaning agent (cf. Thymus*). Scholars have identified another plant as the hyssop used in the Temple as a fumigant, but as Willie Southall notes, it is the main plant growing out of the Weeping Wall, the remnant of the Herodian Temple.*

The ancient use of hyssop as a general remedy for fever and bronchial infection is justified, from a modern perspective, by the fact that mold growing on the leaves produces penicillin. From the traditional standpoint, however, hyssop was valued as a diaphoretic that opened the pores to allow the exit of fever. Hyssop has a smell like skunk, which tips us off that it will be deeply penetrating, opening pores and passageways deep inside the body, as well as in the skin, releasing heat through the skin, bringing cooling, lubricating, cleansing fluids into interior organs, dredging blood and fluids to remove heat and congestion, bringing pathogenic heat to the surface and out through the skin. It is indicated when mucus is hardened from heat baking down the fluids. It acts deeply on heat in the deep tissues and viscera. Richard Hool (1922, 37) gives a good account of this herb.

"In hyssop, when employed for the cure of continued or slow fever, we have one of the finest remedies that we can ever use, especially when children are the sufferers." The old-fashioned term "slow fever" refers to conditions where the nerves are affected so the reactions and movements are slow, numb, and weak. "You will not find its equal when made into an infusion with 1 oz. of hyssop to 1 pint of boiling water, stewed for 15 minutes, and 1 wineglassful being taken every hour during the day. It will be found to have permeated the system, and its stimulating properties to have relieved the dryness of the mucous surfaces lining the stomach and bowels. It will cause diaphoresis or moisture of the skin to appear on the whole surface of the body, and will relieve the kidneys and bladder by means of its diuretic properties, and owing to its mild, aperient action the bowels also will be relieved.

"Scarlet fever, measles, typhoid fever, spotted fever, and inflammation of the bowels in children may be treated in the same manner as above stated. I remember in the year 1868 fever was extensively prevalent in Bolton, and I had a sister who at that time was attacked with the continued or slow fever, which is supposed to last any length of time from three to four to eighteen or twenty weeks. My father and mother were on the point of calling in a doctor, but I persuaded them not to do so, although my sister was in

a very dangerous condition. I prevailed on them to give her plenty of hyssop tea and sponge her body down with vinegar and hot water every day, and keep a good fire in the room." In two weeks she was entirely cured.

"In case of a cough, bronchitis, and asthma, hyssop made into a syrup with sugar, honey, or black treacle, will be found beneficial, as it relieves the dryness of the mucous membranes of the bronchial tubes, and so allays the inflammation and removes the obstructing phlegm preventing plasticity of the blood, and thereby congestion of the lungs and heart. Its action in pneumonia is most beneficial owing to its diaphoretic property." When an old coating of mucus is dispersed from the linings it is replaced by a new coating that is full of rich immunological and healing substances, so that expectoration of old mucus alone has a healing effect. This is a general principle (not limited to hyssop), pointed out by John Reddon, herbalist (OHA), of Toronto.

"In case of sore throat it may be used in the same manner as stated for coughs, and the throat gargled with the infusion or tea three or four times a day." It prevents "swelling of the throat and glands of the neck, and keeps the stomach in good condition, causing a regular evacuation of the bowels.

"Its action on the stomach by means of its bitter, aromatic, odorous principle gives tone to the muscular parts of action, and thereby causing better absorption of the fluids taken into the stomach. By that means it produces the better digestion and assimilation of food, and at the same time removes the fetid or bad-smelling breath.

"It keeps the kidneys and bladder in good condition, so that the water can be voided through its natural channels, and so prevent inflammation or Bright's disease." Hyssop is also known as a remedy to open obstructions to the liver and to treat jaundice.

Herbalist Willie Southall, of Los Angeles, developed the use of hyssop based on the biblical references such as "Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be cleansed," and so on. He has made soaps, bath oils, lotions, and all kinds of products, and contributes to our knowledge of the applications of hyssop. In a similar vein, Juliette

de Bairacli Levy (1973, 152) recommends hyssop for poisoned animals. “An infusion of hyssop plant given morning and evening is highly effective as a remedial agent in all forms of poisoning.” She attributes this knowledge to the animal world. “Foxes are said to seek out this plant when poisoned.” The little critters are evidently better read in the Bible than we generally suppose.

David Dalton (2006, 39) developed a profile for the mental state associated with hyssop as a flower essence that may owe something to the biblical concept. He recommends it for people who feel guilty, feel undeserving of happiness, fear punishment, fear pleasure, and engage in self-sabotage. He also cites it for relationship to the stomach, food assimilation, and mineral deficiency.

TASTE:

pungent, bitter • warm • diffusive

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Fever with dry, hot skin.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Feels guilty, undeserving of happiness, fears punishment, fears pleasure (flower essence).

HEAD

- Lice (external).
- Eye and ear ailments.
- Fetid breath, due to putrid digestion.

- Tonsillitis, sore throat, swollen glands of throat and neck.
- Hoarseness.

RESPIRATION

- *Deep-seated respiratory infection with fever, hardened mucus, harsh, dry cough, hot, dry skin*.
- Colds, congestion, bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, pleurisy.
- *Coughs, irritable, harsh, wheezing, chronic*.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- High blood pressure.

DIGESTION, LIVER

- Deep-seated heat in stomach and intestines, with mucus, putrefaction, worms.
- Liver; hepatitis, jaundice.

SPLEEN, LYMPHATICS

- “Spleen problems” (Tenney).
- Swollen glands.

KIDNEYS

- Kidneys not passing enough water, Bright’s disease, edema, infection.

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscular ache; fibromyalgia (external).
- Epilepsy (probably in convulsions from fever).
- Infantile paralysis.

SKIN

- Skin, cuts, bruises (external; application of fresh leaves).

FEVER

- Skin hot and dry in fever (infusion).
- Continued or slow fever; especially in children (infusion).
- Scarlet fever, measles, typhoid fever, spotted fever, inflammation of the bowels in children (infusion).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves and flowers are removed from the woody stalks and extracted in alcohol or water. Dose: 3–15 drops. Infusion or decoction.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, David Dalton (2), Willie Southall (13-confirmed), Louise Tenney (3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 21), Richard Hool (1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24), Al Tamimi (13).

Illicium verum. Star Anise.

Star anise is a small tree in the magnolia family native to southern China and Vietnam, where it is cultivated for its culinary, medicinal, and pharmaceutical uses. The dried fruit and seeds within are the source of the volatile oil that is the medicinal part. It should not be confused with anise seed *(Pimpinella anisum)*. The oil or a decoction or tincture is used as a sweet, warm, pungent carminative, antispasmodic, bronchial expectorant, and diuretic. Over the years I have used it as a specific for congestion in the maxillary sinuses and it has always worked surprisingly well. The seedpods look like sinuses.

TASTE:

pungent, sweet, warm

CAUTIONS:

Not to be used with small children and not to be confused with *Pimpinella* when the latter is given to children for digestive problems.

Inula helenium. Elecampane.

Elecampane is a member of the composite family native to Europe but grown and occasionally naturalized in North America. It prefers low, moist, fertile ground, in the shade or open. It was anciently classified as hot and dry in the third degree, which means that it opens the pores to release sweat, thins the fluids to drive them out through the pores and channels of elimination, rekindles the internal fire to drive waste products to the surface, and decongests stagnant fluids in the body. It is one of the most antiseptic and antibacterial herbs. It is so sanative that it has been used as a surgical dressing. Late-nineteenth-century research showed that even diluted elecampane (1 to 10,000) will kill bacteria and especially the bacillus of tuberculosis (Frederick Locke, 1895; Maude Grieve, 1931, 281). Elecampane contains high amounts of the starch inulin (up to 44%), mucilage, resin, sterols, bitter terpenoids and sesquiterpenes, and volatile oils (up to 4%).

"Hardly any plant has more virtues," writes Sir John Hill (1740, 165). Elecampane is a warming, stimulating, pungent, aromatic bitter that permeates the bronchial tree. It resolves bacterial infection, reducing heavy, thick, green mucus down to yellow and eventually to white or clear mucus as it sanitizes the lungs. *It is specific to yellow and green mucus, indicating bacterial infection.* The removal of the layer of old, adhesive mucus allows for the secretion of a new layer of thin, clear mucus that is impregnated with immune factors. Meanwhile, the bitters protect the stomach against indigestion caused by mucus that is swallowed. Very typically, the person needing elecampane (often a child) swallows the mucus. It is suited to old, lingering, infected pulmonary conditions that slip into asthma—also to recent-onset bronchitis in children, with gushing mucus, swallowing of mucus, when the cough reflex will not descend deep enough to bring out the big clump of mucus.

After giving *Inula* the cough descends deep enough to bring forth this mucus, which can come gushing out. Some practitioners misunderstand the positive effect of this "ripening" of the stage of the disease, thinking that elecampane causes the infection to go

deeper, rather than causing the cough to go deeper and bring up the locked up mucus.

Elecampane is sometimes called “scabwort.” I always thought this name referred to its use for healing scabs, but I learned from herbalist Jennifer Tucker, of State College, Pennsylvania, that her teacher, Evelyn Snook, used elecampane for proud flesh, where the scab refuses to form. I have since had the opportunity to verify this. This leads us to an additional insight about elecampane. Not only is it suited to old infections in the lungs, where the mucus is green or yellow from the presence of bacteria, but it has a facility for “getting the job done” when there is a lingering, stuck infection that will not yield to treatment. It not only cleans up the bacteria that have taken residence in the part, but corrects the condition of the deteriorated tissue upon which the critters thrive.

Brent Davis, DC, of Nashville, Tennessee, suggests that elecampane has a special influence on the lymphoid tissue in which white cells are embedded—found in the adenoids, tonsils, small intestine, liver, and elsewhere. The white cells are needed to protect passages coming in from the surface, to digest proteinaceous food, and to process toxic materials. Davis especially points to the lymphoid tissue in the gut. He recommends elecampane in poor absorption through the lymphatics surrounding the small intestine, leading to poor tissue nutrition. There are probably also problems with unhealthy bacterial colonies in the colon—elecampane is a vermifuge.

I had a personal experience that supports the idea that elecampane acts on the lymphoid tissue of the throat. Since childhood I suffered from swollen glands and frequent infection in the right side of the throat. One day I took a huge bite of elecampane (I should have known better). Although I quickly spit it out, for the next week I had swelling, heat, and pain in the throat, but after that my throat was in much better shape. I also used occasional cups of sage tea, which cleanses the throat.

The large quantity of inulin contained in the plant (and named after it) is indicative of the fact that *Inula* is nutritious and rebuilding in old, worn-out, exhausted, and broken-down states,

with poor nutrition and assimilation. (Specifically, in Greek medicine, it supports *agglutination*, which helps the nutrients conjoin to the tissues, and helps the lips of the wound come together to prevent proud flesh.) Inulin is a starch that does not trigger insulin but instead provides blood sugar to the muscles and extremities, where the cells take up sugar under the influence of a different hormone (IGF, or insulin-like growth factor). William Salmon (1710) recommended elecampane to rebuild a consumptive and Dorothy Hall speaks of it for thin, hunched, pale persons with obvious poor nutrition. Very often, these are people with poor immunity. Dr. John Christopher (1976, 374) describes it in a similar fashion: "malnutrition, rickets, glandular insufficiency, nervous debility, weakly children, poor digestive powers, muscular weakness, and convalescence." On the other hand, as a powerful stimulant elecampane acts on damp, phlegmatic *kapha* people with stagnant lymphatics.

Salmon (1710, 332) used the distilled oil. "It has all the virtues of the liquid juice, essence, pouder, electuary and spirit, and may be given in place of all or any one of them, being much more powerful than them all. I have had great experience of it in facilitating the birth, and bringing away the after-birth. It powerfully provokes the terms in women where they are stopt; cures vapors and hysterick fits. There is nothing better against coughs, colds, catarrhs, hoarseness, wheezing, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing; as also the colic in stomach or bowels, than this oil. You may give it from six drops to fourteen or twenty, dropping it first into white sugar, and mixing them well; and then mixing all with a glass of good, generous wine, and so drinking it off. It opens obstructions of reins and bladder, and provokes urine powerfuly."

Yet another set of uses are brought out by Al Tamimi (d. 980) in his *Al Murshid*. "Juice of the elecampane in bee's honey prepared with spices and muscat *[Myristica fragrans,]* which is called a king's drink *[potio regia,]* is beneficial for the elderly and those with moisture. It dissolves the moisture of the superfluities, is salutary for pains in cold joints, strengthens the stomach and the heart, increases

the appetite and stimulates the libido" (quoted by Moses Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:331).

I recently saw a case in which I gave a middle-aged woman elecampane for chronic respiratory infection with yellow and green mucus. Not only did it help the sinuses and lungs but the ventricular fibrillation she had went away. She then had a dream in which she had mucus around her heart. She also felt an increase in libido. That was pleasant, though elecampane did not cure the problem she came to me for: lack of energy.

Elecampane is considered to be a heart remedy in Ayurvedic medicine (David Winston). I recently used it with success in an older Afghan refugee who suffered from terrible pain in the heart, with great sadness and grief, as a result of leaving his homeland. The cardiac doctors did not consider him to have a heart problem. He also suffered from an occasional yellow discharge from the sinuses. I gave him *Inula*, 3 drops, 3x/day. It warmed his hands and feet, took the pain out of the heart almost from the first day, and improved his emotional state.

The indication "torn away from one's home," causing grief and suffering, comes from Jennifer Tucker. She uses it for women who have had to follow their husbands to new locations for work and feel torn away from home. The legend is that when Helen was kidnapped by Paris the plant sprang up where her tears fell. Afterward the plant was known as "Helen of the campagna"—elecampane.

An old name for *Inula* is "elfwort." Possibly this plant was used to treat "elfshot"—wasting and preoccupation caused by being shot by an elfin arrowhead. "Elves were supposed to live under the plant," observes Donald Law (1973, 49) rather tentatively.

TASTE:

acrid, bitter, pungent (Christopher, 1976, 374)

TISSUE STATES:

depression, stagnation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Thin, pale, hair lifeless, extremities cold, eyes dull, hunched posture.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Depression*, poor concentration, memory lapses.
- Homesickness, “torn away from home.”
- Helps the disposition.

HEAD

- Weak, dim eyes; cataract.
- Fastens loose teeth; keeps the gums from putrefaction; lessens tooth decay.

RESPIRATION

- Hoarseness; throat swollen, extreme pain.
- Diphtheria (small, repeated doses).
- *Acute bronchitis, especially in children; the cough cannot descend deep enough to bring up the mucus; afterward the mucus gushes out, is swallowed, and creates indigestion.*
- *Any respiratory infection where the mucus causes indigestion.*
- *Chronic postnasal drip, with thick, yellow, green mucus; drips, irritates the throat and stomach.*
- *Old, chronic bronchial and sinus infections, with yellow to green mucus.*
- *Chronic bronchitis turning into asthma.*
- *Sore spots around the lungs; stuffiness in the chest.*
- Shallow breathing, sighing, shortness of breath.
- Persistent cough with substernal pain.
- Tuberculosis.

- Whooping cough.

DIGESTION

- Loss of appetite, poor assimilation, poor lymphoid tissue in gut, malnutrition.
- Gastric atonicity, catarrhal condition of the mucosa.
- Wind and spasm in the stomach and intestines; colic.
- Prickings and pain in the side from swollen spleen.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema; stoppage of urine; stone, gravel; prevents the return of swelling to the foot after a cure of edema has been effected.
- Bladder and urethra; cystitis, catarrh.

FEMALE

- Leucorrhea; green discharge.
- Endometriosis.
- Amenorrhea, delayed menses.
- Expels the afterbirth, prevents putrefaction, convulsions, and fits.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Rheumatic pains and soreness, worse from cold (oil).
- Cramps, convulsions.
- Paralysis of the nerves.

SKIN

- Dry patches on the skin; itching, scabs, and sores.
- *Proud flesh*, the wound does not form a scab.

FEVER

- Fever; restores capillary circulation after exposure to chill.
- Fever; infection deep, septic, putrefactive, malignant; resulting in convulsions, fits, nervous damage.

OTHER

- Snake bite.
- "Malnutrition, rickets, glandular insufficiency, nervous debility, weakly children, poor digestive powers, muscular weakness, and convalescence."

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Traditionally, the roots are used in European medicine, but the flowers are used for the same bronchial symptoms in China. The dried roots are available in commerce, "but it is for most purposes better to take that fresh out of the garden" (John Hill, 1740, 165).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Plinius, William Salmon (5–7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20–22, 27–31, 34, 35, 36), Andrew Lange (2), Jennifer Tucker (3, 33), Evelyn Snook (33), Dorothy Hall (1, 2, 15), Matthew Wood (9–14, 24), Christopher Menzies-Trull (8, 13, 16, 18, 19, 23, 25, 26), Louise Tenney (4, 6, 19, 21, 24), Brent Davis (19), John Christopher (6, 8, 12, 15, 18, 23, 24, 27, 32, 33).

Lactuca virosa. Wild Lettuce.

Wild lettuce is a member of the aster family. The officinal species is Lactuca virosa, *a native of Europe. Prickly lettuce* (L. scariola) *and the native American* L. canadensis *can be used in its place. All are powerful sedatives or relaxants. Wild lettuce contains terpenoid bitters and resins, sesquiterpene lactones, coumarins, acids, alkaloids (a trace of hyoscyamine), flavonoids, and a trace of opiates. I claim, almost in its entirety, credit for developing the following profile for wild lettuce*.

Lactuca relaxes tight muscles and settles insomnia. It is indicated for stiff, sore persons with painful muscles, especially in the lower back. The pulse is slow and hard. This pulse type was produced in the original homeopathic provings in the 1830s and I have confirmed it dozens of times in practice, as has my friend Julia Graves. It indicates "cold blockage" or "internal cold," as it would be termed in Chinese herbalism. This is cold that has invaded the body, causing hardness, stiffness, and pain. It is the opposite of "deficient cold," which arises from a lack of internal heat; the pulse is slow and deep.

Wild lettuce is one of the bitter/acrid remedies that disperse tension caused by penetration of cold. Cold often constricts the pores of the skin. However, in this case the cold goes to a deeper level, anchoring in the muscles and articulations, resulting in stiff, sore muscles, lack of bend-ability, soreness in the lower back, and shallow respiration from tight muscles across the chest. Sometimes there is slight evidence of the heat that is being blocked by the cold. Heat rises; in the case of *Lactuca* it produces red margins of the eyelids, allergies, and facial acne.

Lactuca is one of the best remedies in existence for teenage acne, or any acne where the face is involved and there is a rough, cystic form with deep cysts slowly coming to the surface; the whole causing unsightly roughness and scar tissue. It will clean this up from the inside, reducing the acne on the face for several weeks. Then a new crop—the cysts from below—boil up at about the third week and cause a new outbreak. After that the face clears up and even old scars seemingly disappear because the heat, swelling, and waste products in what appear to be scars are dissipated. Meanwhile, the hard, slow pulse softens.

I have a note from a now forgotten source to "treat wild lettuce like a drug" because "overuse can rob one of motivation." This is exactly what lactuca, in small doses, is for. I call it the "street person remedy." It is for people with a complete lack of motivation. Before this stage is reached, however, it is a remedy for negative-thinking. This came out in the homeopathic provings. Lactuca people sit and think about the worst possible scenarios that could happen and that

keeps them home, brooding over imaginary problems and injustices (John Henry Clarke). I have often verified this symptom in practice. It may go along with the shallow breathing.

So far we have been discussing lactuca from the standpoint of an "energetic" model involving cold, but the symptoms can also be accounted for from another perspective. Deep chills, acne, and frustration can also be associated with high androgen levels. Androgen is hard for the liver to break down and is one of the causes of "bad blood" and skin eruptions. High levels occur in teenagers, both boys and girls, as they enter sexual maturity and their bones grow—androgen stimulates bone growth. Lactuca is one of the great remedies for teenagers ("acne, frustration, lack of motivation"), along with phytolacca ("lazy, apathetic teenagers"). One would associate high androgen levels with a high sex drive—we certainly see this in teens—but high levels do not translate automatically to a successful sex life. Indeed, they are often associated with frustration and the need to make changes in life.

Androgen stimulates the immune system, the sex drive, and the liver, but it can overstimulate all of these functions, resulting in chills alternating with fever (or just chilliness and stiffness), frustration, and liver and skin problems. High levels of androgen are a particular problem—and a very common one—in young women, causing polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and infertility. I have twice used lactuca for infertility with success. The indication was the slow and hard pulse. It was only years later that I realized lactuca had a hormonal effect. In one case the woman was pregnant within five days; in the other, less than a month. From an energetic perspective we would blame the infertility on cold in the uterus, or even "cold in the liver meridian."

This view of wild lettuce, as a specific for high androgen, is a product of my clinical experience, and has not been explained pharmacologically. Indeed, my theory of treatment for hyperandrogenism, which revolves around intense bitters, is based on clinical experience. However, I offer it as the fruit of experience, to be accepted or rejected by additional study. Wild lettuce is in a group of remedies for high androgen that are intensely bitter,

including blessed thistle and white hoarhound. There are, however, remedies for this condition that are not bitter, like Easter lily—in my experience another great acne remedy. And speaking of hormones, one client who was taking it for her back pain reported that it lowered her blood sugar levels.

Samuel Henry (1814, 475) considered *Lactuca virosa* to be very effective in dropsy—but was it actually the naturalized *L. scariola*?—Henry is poor with his botany. "I have found an extract prepared from the expressed juice of the leaves, gathered when in flower, of great efficacy in the cure of the dropsy." He gave 10–12 grains/day, in four doses, increasing the dose until the diuresis started. "They agree very well with the stomach, quench thirst, proved gently laxative, powerfully diuretic, and somewhat diaphoretic." He also gave a tea of "cohush" or *Caulophyllum*. The wife of a judge in Ramapo, New Jersey, was "laboring under an ascites," which was getting worse. He left some *Lactuca* and *Caulophyllum* and returned to New York City. "Two days after, I asked the judge how his lady was; he told me, to my surprise, that his wife was at work in the kitchen, and that after using the medicine I had left she had made whole pots of water."

TASTE:

bitter, acrid • warm, moist

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Lack of motivation; hard experiences; deadened, stiff, cold.
- *Negative-thinking; train of thought habitually ends in negative possibilities and outcomes*.

- *Insomnia*, restlessness.
- Excitability in children.
- Teething in children (tea).

FACE

- Redness of the margins of the eyelids, with general cold; allergies.
- *Facial acne, cystic acne, scar tissue*.

RESPIRATION

- Coughing, whooping cough, bronchitis, asthma.
- *Tension across muscles of the chest; constricted, shallow breathing*.
- Constant tickling cough.

MALE

- Blows to the testicles.
- Inflamed prostate.

FEMALE

- Dysmenorrhea.
- Infertility.
- Lactation.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Tension and tightness of the lower back*.
- Cold extremities.

SKIN

- Warts, moles, cancers (juice, external).
- *Pulse slow and hard*.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are harvested in late spring or early summer, before the flowers come out. Extract fresh in alcohol. Dose: 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day. Low homeopathic potencies can also be used. Large doses induce sleep.

CAUTION:

Lactuca can cause sleepiness; caution before driving. Always warn clients they can get sleepy while driving when on wild lettuce.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, homeopathic provings (2, 19), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 6–9, 11, 14, 15, 19), Ralph Russell (5), Julia Graves (19-confirmed), Tommie Bass (18), Christopher Menzies-Trull (4).

Lamium album. White Archangel, White Deadnettle.

This dainty member of the mint family is native to Europe and central and northern Asia. One cousin (Lamium amplexicaule) *is widely naturalized in North America, and others are grown as ornamentals. I never thought any of them looked like a nettle until I was in Britain, and saw the nettles over there* (Urtica urens). *Some of them do look like deadnettle*. Lamium *flower is used in European folk medicine primarily as a female remedy. It contains flavonol glucosides, mucilage, amines (histamine, tyramine, methylamine), saponins, tannins, and volatile oils. It is chiefly valued as an astringent and diuretic*.

"The flowers are the only part used," writes Sir John Hill (1740, 62). "They are to be gathered in May, and made into conserve. A pound of them is to be beat up with two pounds and a half of sugar. They may also be dried. They are excellent in the whites, and all other weaknesses." *Lamium* flowers are indicated in young women

who are suffering from weakness from a nutritive cause—hence the use of sugar. Precisely the same indications are given two centuries later by Dr. Rudolf Weiss (1988, 314). He cites *Lamium* as a traditional German folk remedy for vaginal discharge in young, asthenic girls. That would be thin, atrophic, *vata* women. He adds, "It is often possible to get very good results in these persistent cases, particularly if another tonic such as yarrow is added." The use of archangel has declined in Britain, but is still established in Germany. It is virtually unknown in North America.

Herbalist George Slack (1812–93) of Derbyshire gives the following account of the more general applications of the archangels —red, white, and yellow. "Good for the spleen, whites, floodings, bleeding of the nose, spitting blood, or any kind of hemorrhage; it is very effectual in healing green wounds, bruises, and burns" (Slack, 1919, 104).

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Insomnia.
- Nosebleed.
- Inflammation of the mouth and throat.
- Catarrh of the upper respiratory tract.
- Cough, bronchitis, pleurisy.
- Stomach; gastritis, bloating, flatulence.
- Swollen spleen.
- Intestinal hemorrhage.
- Urinary and vaginal catarrh.
- Menstruation; excessive bleeding during periods, breakthrough bleeding, cramping, PMS, vaginal discharge.
- Leucorrhea of young, asthenic girls.
- Inflamed prostate.
- Arthritis, gout, sciatica (poultice).
- Skin, mild, superficial inflammation (external).
- Anemia.
- Hemorrhage (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

"The flowers are used medicinally; they have to be pulled from their calices one by one" (Weiss). This is probably the reason why this herb has not been commercially exploited. Infusion of the herb; tincture.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Hill (2, 10, 11, 16), George Slack (2, 7, 16), Rudolf Weiss (11), Christopher Menzies-Trull (1, 2, 4, 5, 7–13, 15), Thomas Fleming (3, 4, 5, 6, 14).

Lavandula officinalis, L. angustifolia, L. spica, L. vera. Lavender.

Lavender is a perennial mint native to dry, chalky mountains in the western half of the Mediterranean. Generally, mints are relaxant to the nervous system and lavender follows this guideline. Because of their high

volatile oil content, many mints are warming and stimulating (basil, rosemary, sage, thyme, and others), but lavender is a cooling stimulant. It contains volatile oils, triterpenes, coumarins, and flavonoids. Lavender must have been in use long before the ancient Greek authors on materia medica flourished. Dioscorides, Galen, and the Arabic physicians give it prominence and its virtues have been appreciated to the present. The aromatic flowers are used, or the oil obtained from them.

Lavender is a cooling relaxant suited to spasmodic and tensive conditions involving the nerves, muscles, and neurovascular system. It has long been used for psychological tension, migraine headaches, spasms, and paralysis, as well as neurological symptoms from insect and adder bites. In headache the oil is put on the temples. A survey of a variety of sources, from different periods and places, demonstrates a similar view of the action of lavender on the mind and nervous system.

John Quincy (1736, 73) writes of the flowers, "There are no diseases of the head in which they are not employ'd, under some form or other; they are also very grateful and cordial to the stomach. In all paralytic affections they are reckon'd to give place to nothing; and used in loss of speech they do wonders."

Rudolf Steiner (1975, 134) says that lavender is for "negative states of the soul." As he explains it, the "astral body" grasps the physical body too tightly. This results in spasms, tension, paralysis, and nerve-wasting. Steiner's "astral body" is essentially identical to the autonomic nervous system, which relays impressions felt by the unconscious. Thus, he is describing conditions where unconscious experiences are causing the autonomic to clamp down too intensely.

Herbalist Barbara St. Dennis recommends lavender as a mental calmative. It opens up the mind so that some of the contents can be moved out. It is as if the mind grasped its contents too tightly. She recommends it in combination with chamomilla for hyperactive children. "The world is moving towards the lavender condition," she observes. "What used to be called obsessional thinking is now

normal. People are mentally full. They are addicted to a stress-filled life."

Australian herbalist Dorothy Hall (1988) recommends lavender for people who can't sleep because their mind is too active. (Paradoxically, it also wakes up people who are feeling sleepy.) She makes light of the fact that lavender is associated with cleansing (*lavar*—to clean). She says that lavender is indicated in people who feel unclean, or have too high standards. These people are driven, suffer from overwork and too intense self-application, with headaches, tension in the neck and shoulders, drooping of the head from fatigue (cf. *Verbena hastata*).

Lavender is used in southern Europe for snake bite. (We should keep in mind that the European adder is hardly as poisonous as the many dangerous snakes of North America.) The little flower head as it raises up has been likened to a snake's head and the plant is sometimes even called "asp lavender." Gascon herbalist Maurice Mességué remembered how the hunting dogs, when he was a boy, were treated with lavender when they were bitten by asps.

Lavender is traditionally used as an essential oil rather than as an infused or tinctured herb. An interesting account of the oil is given by Dr. Dietrich Gümbel. He takes a somewhat different view of lavender than most other authors. He explains the calmative effects of lavender by the assertion that the oil stimulates the development and extension of the capillary network. This increases the surface area through which the blood flows into the tissues. It thus promotes a decongesting and cleansing effect that is cooling and relaxing. This influence is especially felt on the skin, nerves, and liver.

In comparison to other authors, Gümbel places unusual stress on the action of lavender on the liver. As the portal vein arises from the intestines and ascends toward the liver it ramifies into finer veins until it forms a complex of vessels that support and bathe the hepatic cells in the venous blood full of the toxins that they must metabolize. In order to stay alive these cells need to receive a constant and ample supply of life-giving arterial blood to provide oxygen and dilute the toxic venous blood. Thus, the expansion of

the capillary bed cools the liver and keeps the hepatic cells from being overwhelmed. Another author who mentions the association with the liver is Rudolf Weiss. He classifies lavender as a mild hepatic that should be used in combination with more active agents.

Gümbel further suggests that lavender enhances conversion of glycogen or sugar stored in the liver, to glucose. This makes stored sugar more available for use throughout the body. Thus lavender has a glucagon-like effect—the opposite of its cousin rosemary, which has an insulin-like effect. By opening the peripheral circulation lavender brings the blood and blood sugar to the tissues for nourishment. This helps to explain its action on neurasthenia, asthenia, wasting, and weakness—*vata*. However, wasting can also be due to nerve spasm, which lavender also releases, so the effect works through both relaxant and nutritive approaches.

TASTE:

cooling, aromatic, antiseptic

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, constriction, atrophy, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- Tension, irritability, nervousness, anxiety, panic, depression, nervous exhaustion; especially in *vata* types.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Overconscientious, perfectionist, detail-oriented, picky.
- Depression and anxiety connected with an irritable bowel.
- Insomnia; mind too active to sleep.
- Exhaustion in people who do too much meditation.

HEAD

- Dizziness, fainting.
- Severe headache, migraine, neuralgia of the head (a drop of oil on the temple).
- Migraine from detail work, at the end of the day, at the end of the work week.
- Head droops from fatigue.
- Tension in the cervical vertebrae and trapezius muscles; neck and shoulders.

DIGESTION

- Loose teeth, bad breath (mouthwash).
- Nervous dyspepsia with flatulence, cramping, nausea; vomiting.
- Faulty appetite, cramp in the stomach, intestinal gas and colic.
- Motion sickness.

RESPIRATION

- Influenza, bronchitis, asthma, whooping cough.
- *Pneumonia* (a few drops of the oil in water).

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Palpitations.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Painful arthritic joints; worse from overexertion (external, foot bath).
- Weakness of limbs, paralysis (external).

SKIN

- Skin; burns, vesiculation with redness.
- Poisoned wounds, snake bites (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The oil is most frequently used. It is applied to the skin and should never be taken internally. An infusion of the flowers or flowering herb may be used internally.

CAUTIONS:

Research demonstrates that the slight estrogenic effect may not be appropriate for teenage boys.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dietrich Gümbel, Rudolf Weiss, Dorothy Hall (2, 4, 8–10), Julia Graves (1, 5-confirmed), Flower Essence Society (5), Christopher Menzies-Trull (3, 11, 14, 17), Pam Fisher (16), John Quincy (19), Maude Grieve (7, 20), Maurice Mességué (21).

Leonurus cardiaca. Motherwort.

Motherwort is a mint native to Europe, but has become a common weed in parts of North America, especially around human habitation. The leaves, which have a nauseously bitter taste, are the part used in herbalism. It has properties similar to the other bitter mints such as lycopus and scutellaria; all three are for hyperthyroidism. It contains bitter iridoids, diterpenes, and alkaloids, flavonoids, caffeic acid, lauric acid, oleic acid, glucosides, resins, tannins, and volatile oils. The alkaloids have a mild vasodilating effect.

The name motherwort indicates a traditional association with the "mother" (uterus) and motherhood. It has long been used as a sedative in nervousness associated with female hormonal changes. It also acts on the heart somewhat more strongly than some of the mints and is used as a "heart tonic" and a specific in nervousness with heart palpitations. It has been credited with an organ affinity to the heart since early times. This may be based on the doctrine of signatures: the rhythmic distribution of the flowers on the stalk suggests the heart or pulse. This remedy also has an influence on hyperthyroidism, often associated with cardiac palpitations and nervousness. Culpeper says that "Venus owns this herb and that it is under Leo," meaning that it is a female remedy with an affinity to the heart. It was from the British herbalists and botanical physicians that the cardiac properties of leonurus spread to American practitioners (A. Dawes, MD, *Ellingwood's Therapeutist*, 1908, 2, 6, 24).

The medicinal actions of motherwort probably depend on the intense acrid bitters, which may calm the sympathetic nervous system. It is a remedy for nervous restlessness, wakefulness, disturbed sleep, and anxiety. It opens the skin (motherwort is used as a diaphoretic), releases fever, cools, mildly stimulates the colon and kidneys, and relaxes the uterus. The aromatic bitters were noted in Greek medicine to act particularly upon the uterus. It is indicated in retention of the afterbirth "from any cause, amenorrhea from cold [spasm]; dysmenorrhea, with morbid nervous excitability, and

hysteria." A special indication is "harassing bearing down pains" (Ellingwood, 1918, 483).

Ellingwood was one of the best gynecological/obstetric authors in the late eclectic tradition. He writes, "Prof. John King regarded motherwort as superior to all other remedies in suppression of the lochia," or retention of the afterbirth, "giving it internally and applying a fomentation of the herb over the lower abdominal region. The author has used it with excellent results." It is also used as an oxytocic to induce labor, though it is used throughout pregnancy, safely, to calm nervous tension and palpitation.

Herbalist Matthew Becker notes that motherwort drains excessive heat from the upper part of the body associated with a red face, excessive emotionality (not anger), hyperthyroidism, heart palpitations, and high blood pressure. It is especially appropriate for women who are nervous, anxious, move too quickly to thoughts, emotions, or actions that are not thought out. Herbalist Barbara St. Dennis says that motherwort is especially appropriate in menopausal women with "that freaked out look," nervousness, and anxiety.

Herbalist William LeSassier gave an unusual constitutional indication for motherwort. He associated it with a hollow, caved-in chest, odd shapes in the sternum, and scoliosis. It also has an affinity to the spine. It is indicated for "spinal irritation" and "pain in the pelvis and lumbar regions in females" (Ellingwood). It is somewhat tonic and nutritive, perhaps a bitter tonic that stimulates secretion, digestion, and metabolism. Hence it is indicated in anemia, cachexia, debility, and nervous weakness.

TASTE:

bitter, acrid • aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Hollow, caved-in chest, odd shapes in the sternum, scoliosis.
- Chronic diseases with wakefulness, restlessness, disturbed sleep, spinal irritation, neuralgia of the stomach and head.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Red face, excessive emotionality (not anger), heart palpitations.
- Big, staring eyes.
- Freaked out expression in menopausal women; nervousness, anxiety.

HEAD

- Headache, insomnia, dizziness, from peripheral circulatory tension.
- Hyperthyroidism, goiter.

DIGESTION

- Feeble digestion, general nervous debility.
- Indigestion connected with nervous irritability and weakness, hormonal problems, spinal pain.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- "Feebleness of the heart" (Neil).
- *Heart palpitations; during pregnancy, menstruation, menopause;* associated with uterine disease, amenorrhea, cachexia, and an irritable, excitable, enfeebled state of the nervous system.
- Precordial pain with palpitation.
- High blood pressure.
- *Hyperthyroidism with heart symptoms; tachycardia, heart palpitations* (cf. *Lycopus, Melissa*).

KIDNEYS

- Edema associated with nephritis; clears protein in the blood and urine.
- Bloody urine from the passage of stones.

FEMALE

- Vaginismus *(Leonurus sibiricus)*.
- *Cramps*, chorea, convulsions, nervousness from irregular or *delayed menses*.
- Pelvic inflammatory disease.
- Puberty: menstrual irregularity and nervousness.
- *Menstruation: cramping, delayed menses, amenorrhea, nervous weakness*.
- *Premenstrual nerve tension and muscular rigidity, with painful cramping, suppressed menses, tension, heart palpitations, back pain and spasm*.
- *Spasms and harassing bearing down pains, and morbid sensitivity from uterine disease*, pain in the pelvic and lumbar regions in females; suppressed lochia from any cause.
- Postpartum: expels the afterbirth; strengthens the postpartum uterine contractions stimulated by lactation; "can be used from the first to the fourth or fifth day to help clarify drainage and prevent uterine infection, particularly when accompanied by an uva ursi or manzanita sitz bath" (Michael Moore).
- Menopause: heart palpitations, nervousness, anxiety, hot flashes.

FEVER

- Fever, colds, chills, influenza; with nervous involvement, debility, exhaustion.
- Weakness and debility following fever or menopausal hot flashes; with heart palpitations and nervousness.
- Spasms, fits, seizures; after fever has dried out the fluids (cf. *Verbena hastata*).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Numbness in the limbs.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The entire herb is harvested after it has flowered. Dry for use by infusion or extract fresh in alcohol. Very bitter. I use small doses: 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

“Not appropriate during pregnancy, and although often useful in menopause, it can increase flooding for some women, in which case it should be withdrawn, usually in favor of bugleweed.” “Employed directly after childbirth, it may contribute to bleeding” (Michael Moore, 2003, 169).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Matthew Becker (3, 13), Barbara St. Dennis (4, 5), Finley Ellingwood (2, 8, 9, 11, 18, 20–27), William LeSassier (1), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 29), A. W. and L. R. Priest (7, 11, 14), Michael Moore (14, 17, 18, 21–24), James Neil (10), A. W. Kuts-Cheraux, John Christopher.

Levisticum officinale. Lovage.

Lovage is an old European folk remedy, little used at the present time, but mentioned in all the older books. It is a member of the parsley family (Apiaceae) native to low, salty ground in Europe, but easily grown in many other locations. It contains a lot of salt (noticeable in the taste of the leaves, similar to celery), volatile oils, some bitter terpenes, coumarins, sterols, resin, and gum.

Lovage contains much salt, which explains its strong diuretic capacity. It helps mop up cardiac and renal edema, increasing the elimination of fluid and minerals. “The salt makes it emollient in indurative diseases, such as gout, rheumatism, kidney stones, spleen and liver ailments” (Husemann and Wolff, 1982, 340). It also warms and stimulates the digestive viscera, so it is a “strengthener of the stomach, and by its detersive virtues also help against the jaundice and obstructions of the spleen” (Quincy, 1736, 83). It counters sluggish lymphatic circulation (Dan Kenner and Yves Requena, 2001, 110), warms the abdomen, and promotes healthy menstruation.

TASTE:

salty, slightly bitter, slightly warm

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- “Migraine resulting from deficient kidney activity” (Husemann and Wolff).
- Conjunctivitis (eye drops).

RESPIRATION

- Tonsillitis.
- Otitis, earache; inflammation and swelling (warm oil dropped in the ear).
- Catarrh.

DIGESTION

- Aphthous ulcers (mouthwash).
- Loss of appetite, dyspepsia, gastritis, flatulence.
- Flatulent colic, intestinal spasm.
- Spleen and liver problems.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Cardiac edema.

KIDNEYS

- Edema, calculi, enuresis, pyelonephritis, glomerulonephritis, albuminuria, proteinuria.
- Urinary tract infections, cystitis, urinary retention.

FEMALE

- Asthenic women.
- Muscle spasm, dysmenorrhea.
- Amenorrhea and menostasis.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Gout, rheumatism.

SKIN

- Foul-smelling sweat associated with renal disease.
- Dermatoses; acne on the back; seborrhea; psoriasis.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The rhizome, roots, leaves, and seeds have been used in traditional medicine.

CAUTIONS:

The irritating volatile oil can cause aggravation when there is active inflammation in the urinary tract. Members of this family generally should not be used during pregnancy.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Nicholas Culpeper (2), Christopher Menzies-Trull (3, 5–8, 12, 13), Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff (1, 4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (11–16, 18).

Lilium candidum. Madonna Lily.

Madonna lily grows wild in Lebanon, but is widely cultivated and sometimes naturalized elsewhere. The fresh and dried bulb has been used in Greek and Arabic medicine from the most ancient times. It was still an important female remedy in Britain when Maude Grieve wrote in 1931. However, Madonna lily has fallen out of use in English-speaking herbalism. The analogous Chinese Easter lily may be used in its place. The former is warm and moist, while the latter is slightly cool and moist.

The bulb of Madonna lily contains soluble polysaccharides, starch, mucilage, tannins, stearin, and glycosides. The bulb and petals contain unusual amounts of boron. The following portrait of Madonna lily has been developed by my friend Julia Graves, who now lives in "Madonna lily country" (Normandy), where it is still used in folk medicine.

Madonna lily bulb and petals are traditionally used as a mucilage, to moisten surfaces, and as an emollient, to break up hard swellings. It is used externally for ulcers, inflammation, boils, red skin, burns, and injuries. A poultice of the bulb boiled in milk is used warm on frostbite. A bulb baked in the oven is squeezed and put on an abscess. A warm poultice of cooked bulb is put on bruises. Madonna lily flowers are extracted for 6 hours in brandy then applied to wounds. For ear pain, use 3 drops of oil made by cold infusion in olive oil. Inflammation of the beds of the nails is treated with a warm poultice made from cooked bulb (Dr. Jean Rivolier and Caroline Rivolier, *Secrets et Vertus des Plantes Médicinales*, cited by Julia Graves).

Julia Graves relates: "Here in Madonna lily country, they collect the petals and dry them to wrap them around wounds, saying that it will prevent infection and pus formation and speed up the healing

(purity being really the biggest keynote of this plant maybe). My friend told me that when she was a child, her friend sprained her ankle and the grandma took macerated Madonna lily petals to apply as a poultice. She does not remember, however, what it was macerated in."

Madonna lily bulb is used internally for gynecological problems, according to Grieve. Because it is mucilaginous and emollient, it is used to dissolve cysts of the skin, breasts, uterus, and ovaries. Nicholas Culpeper (1653) cited it for "swellings in the privities."

Julia Graves differentiates the mental states between Madonna lily and Easter lily: "The former has more sensitivity, bordering on clairvoyance." She has often verified the indications I found long ago, that this is a remedy for people who feel a great conflict between the sexual and the spiritual, or are too sexual or too spiritual. She further notes that these lilies have a powerful feminizing element, making one more receptive and intuitive, and reducing fear about being vulnerable or feminine.

"The odor of the first buds of lilies, and indeed the odor of the flowers, makes a person's heart joyful and furnishes him with virtuous ideas," notes Hildegard von Bingen (1998, 22).

TASTE:

"mildly bitter and unpleasant flavor" (Fleming, 1998, 937) • warm, moist • mucilaginous

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Bronchial catarrh.
- Menstruation: pain and hemorrhaging.
- Cysts.
- Bruises, wounds, inflammation, abscesses, frostbite.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Flower petals in brandy, bulbs in oil.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Nicholas Culpeper, Maude Grieve, Julia Graves, Thomas Fleming.

Lilium longiflorum. Easter lily.

Easter lily (Lilium brownii, L. longiflorum) *has a long history of use in traditional Chinese herbalism. It was one of the cardinal remedies used by Zhang Zhongjing, the great reformer of the third century CE, one of the greatest herbalists of all time. The white, demulcent rhizome is the part usually available in commerce in the West but the flowers are also used in China. I have long used the flowers, soaked in water, in the sun, like a flower essence, preserved in alcohol.*

Easter lily is classified as a remedy for "yin deficiency" bronchitis in Chinese herbalism. That would be a condition where lack of fluids causes heat. However, this is an oversimplification of an extensive tradition. Zhang Zhongjing (c. 200 CE) describes the use of lily bulb in *Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber*. In fact, he named a disease pattern after the plant: "lily bulb syndrome." He writes: "The patient wants to eat, but is reluctant to swallow food, and is unwilling to speak. Or he prefers to lie in bed, yet cannot lie quietly due to restlessness. He may want to walk about, but soon becomes tired. Now and then he may enjoy eating certain delicacies, but at other times he cannot even tolerate the smell of food. He may feel either cold or hot, but without fever or chill. He also has a bitter taste in his mouth and passes reddish urine. No drugs appear able to cure the syndrome. After taking medicine, acute vomiting and diarrhea may occur. The disease 'haunts' the patient, and though his appearance is normal, he is actually suffering. His pulse is somewhat speedy."

Lily bulb syndrome is especially common after inappropriate use of powerful diaphoretics, emetics, or purgatives have driven out the fluids of the body. These drugs are banned by Zhang Zhongjing until the yin is restored. If the deficiency is due to diaphoretics lily bulb is combined with a remedy to moisten the skin and lungs *(Anemarrhena)*, after emetics it is combined with egg yolk, and after purgatives with talc and hematite. Many other systems can be damaged. For a complete account of the use of lily bulb by Zhang Zhongjing refer to *Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber*, translated by Luo Xiwen (1987, 44–49).

Alternatively, lily bulb syndrome is said to occur after cold has caused a disease and subsides to leave a pathogenic heat that produces the "yin deficiency" bronchitis of modern Chinese literature. When there is a lack of yin or fluids either there is a lack of mucus or the mucus gets dried out. In lily bulb syndrome it is the latter; therefore, some practitioners have qualified the description of the syndrome from "yin deficiency" to "stagnant mucus." The phlegm is often "baked" and stuck in the periphery of the bronchial tree, and difficult to raise. With this there may be fever with a red face.

My own experience with Easter lily is extensive and complementary to the above, but also considerably different. I originally used Easter lily as a substitute for Madonna lily *(Lilium candidum)*, which was an important female remedy in Western herbalism until quite recently (cf. Maude Grieve). Nicholas Culpeper informs us that it is a remedy for "swellings in the privities," and this, with the Eastern association with stagnant mucus, suggested cysts. Easter lily turned out to be a wonderful remedy for cysts of the ovaries, breasts, and skin. It also turned out that it was a tremendous remedy for infertility. Quite a few women have gotten pregnant after using Easter lily. Further reflection and experience led to the conclusion that it was a remedy for mucus obstructing the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus, and that it increased fertility by removing mucus that kept the egg from descending or implanting. The menstrual blood was often stringy and brown from the passage of mucus after taking Easter lily. This also turned out to be an

excellent indication for taking the remedy. In addition to cleansing the female tract, I found from extensive clinical experience (dozens of cases) that Easter lily will correct unsightly acne in young women, especially when it is on or under the cheekbones or zygomatic arch, and when the skin is elsewhere clear and beautiful, like the petal of the Easter lily flower.

I was also led to understandings about this remedy through the doctrine of signatures. The flower suggests purity and yet intense sexuality. Thus, I started to use the flower essence for conflicted feelings about sex and it proved to be a wonderful remedy in this capacity and has been much verified by many others in the flower essence field. My friend Phyllis Light has used Easter lily several times for calming excessive sexual desire in both women and men. One can readily see the similarity between the conflicted feelings recorded by Zhang Zhongjing and those I have recorded, though I didn't know about the classical Chinese tradition at the time.

I believe Easter lily is suited to androgen excess. This would account for the intense sex desire, often with frustration and conflicted feelings, acne, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), and infertility. I was informed by British herbalists working from their own experience that high androgen is a cause of mucus in the female tract (cf. *Marrubium*). This fit my own experience—though I had never thought it out that far.

Easter lily provides some of my favorite case histories, complete with delightful evidence in the form of offspring. One of my friends had a case where the woman had been told she would never bear children. She was surprised (and angry) a few months after starting Easter lily to find herself in a family way. Here is a case history from a recent case. A forty-year-old woman had been suffering from ovarian cysts that would rupture midcycle to produce internal bleeding with great pain. The problem dated back to the birth of her first baby at age twenty-seven, or to gallbladder removal at that time. She had one more child and four miscarriages. Finally, several doctors told her she would not get pregnant again due to the large amount of scar tissue in the ovarian region. Although the symptoms did not occur every month, one time she almost died, and numerous

times she suffered from extreme pain and internal bleeding. She always knew when a bad cycle was approaching because she would have a lot of stringy, clear, thick, slippery mucus before ovulation, followed by brownish, stringy discharge afterward. If the cyst ruptured she had internal bleeding with pain that was more intense than usual and lasted for many days. Her monthly pains radiated from one ovary (not necessarily the one involved) around her back, sometimes to the other ovary, and were sharp, causing her to double up and walk hunched over. During the bad months she felt backache and extreme fatigue. She began Easter lily flower essence, 1 drop, 1x/day, and had well-regulated periods for six months. The pain was completely relieved or tolerated without drugs. After that she became pregnant and had a little boy. I could hear him in the background when she ordered a second bottle three years later. Herbs are so beautiful!

TASTE:

slightly cool, moist • mucilaginous

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Grief, sadness, depression; can't receive love, can't let go.
- Sex drive intense, conflicted.
- Yawning, can't concentrate.

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Clear, luminous skin, marred by acne under the zygomatic arch.

RESPIRATION

- Chronic bronchial infection with congestion, redness of the face, fever.
- Congestion of mucus, lingering, in the bronchial tree or sinuses, after active infection has subsided to a low grade.

FEMALE

- Cysts in the breasts, ovaries, skin; soft, movable cysts; change location and shape from period to period; worse from coffee.
- Menses and ovaries painful.
- Infertility; from mucus in the fallopian tubes and uterus; the egg is unable to descend and implant, leading to polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS).
- Brownish, stringy, mucoid vaginal discharge or menstrual blood.

FEVER

- Fever.

OTHER

- “Pulse somewhat speedy.”

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Flowers are collected in midsummer and tinctured in alcohol or made into a flower essence. The tincture of the flowers is quite active and can cause emotional and physical upset, so the best doses are small: 1 drop, 1x/day for 10–14 days before the period (Matthew Wood). If the bulb is used, soak overnight until a foam leaves the bulbs, remove them, and use per decoction by itself or with other agents (Zhang Zhongjing).

CAUTIONS:

Usually regarded as entirely nontoxic.

LITERATURE:

Traditional Western herbalism (7), traditional Chinese medicine (5, 6, 11, 12), Matthew Becker (1, 3), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 4–10), Julia Graves (confirmed: 1–2, 7–10), Phyllis Light (confirmed: 2), David Milgrom, DC (9), Lise Wolff (9).

Linaria vulgaris. Toadflax.

Linaria is a member of the Scrophulariaceae family native to Europe, but widely naturalized in temperate North America, so that its orange and yellow flowers are commonplace near the calcareous gravel along roads. It contains flavonoids, citric acid, tannins, mucilage, sugar, sodium, and an alkaloid.

Toadflax is an acrid bitter, hence useful to stimulate liver function and gallbladder secretion, and an astringent, thus adding a tonifying element. The movement of fluids is furthered by the presence of a small amount of diuretic salt and the whole effect is directed toward cooling by the flavonoids. The liver and gallbladder are relaxed by the use of a warm infusion, which increases bile secretion when necessary or reduces bilirubin levels in the blood (jaundice) from congestion. The increased bile in the intestine lubricates the stool. The use of toadflax for hemorrhoids indicates passive venous congestion in the portal vein, pressing back from the liver and gallbladder.

"For liver stress from poor diet, or malabsorption, toadflax helps decongest and repair. Likewise in alcohol excess, or post-hepatitis exhaustion, it helps detoxify and soothe the liver. For this it combines well with dandelion and yellow dock root; and is useful in all spleen and liver enlargements and inflammations" (Robert Dale Rogers, 2000, 100).

Toadflax also contains a "weak saline" element, according to Maude Grieve (1931, 816). This makes it diuretic and it is used for edema, gravel, cystitis, prostate inflammation, and difficult

urination. “It was at one time in great reputation among herb doctors for dropsy.

“The fresh plant is sometimes applied as a poultice or fomentation to hemorrhoids, and an ointment of the flowers has been employed for the same purpose, and also locally in diseases of the skin. A cooling ointment is made from the fresh plant—the whole herb is chopped and boiled in lard till crisp, then strained. The result is a fine green ointment, a good application for piles, sores, ulcers, and skin eruptions.”

Dr. J. G. Rademacher spoke highly of the use of linaria for knotted bunches of hemorrhoids, and for phlebitis. He also introduced it for inflammation of the vessels of the eyes. He recommended decoction of *Linaria* for headstrong, willful children with inflamed eyes, where one is often not even able to examine the eyes—“so I do not need to explain why it is so useful in these cases.” Keep the compress moistened and over the eye.

TASTE:

“weakly saline, bitter, and slightly acrid” (Grieve)

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Headstrong, willful children, with inflamed eyes.
- Red, inflamed, swollen vessels in the eyes.
- Swollen glands, spleen disorders, scrofula.
- Liver congestion; jaundice, gallstones.
- Constipation.
- Hemorrhoids, knotted bunches.
- Edema, gravel.
- Cystitis.
- Prostatitis.
- Sciatica.
- Phlebitis.
- Bubonic plague, lymphadenitis.

- Postpartum: expels placenta.
- Dermic ulcers, macules, sores.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The flowering herb cut just above the ground. Decoction, infusion, tincture. Salve, compress.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, J. G. Rademacher, Maude Grieve, Robert Dale Rogers.

Linum usitatissimum. Flaxseed, Linseed.

Flaxseed contains up to 45% fixed oils (omega-3 and -6, alpha-linolenic acid, which metabolizes to prostaglandins), resins, phosphates, lignans, sterols, phytoestrogens, triterpenes, cyanogenic glycosides, and mucilage up to 10%. Prostaglandins are hormone precursors that contribute to the regulation of blood pressure, clotting, heart rate, vascular dilation, and immunity.

Ground flaxseed produces an oily meal that is an excellent nutritive tonic to lubricate the colon, remove constipation from dryness and atrophic weakness, increase bile production and fat absorption, and build the lipid economy of the body. It also acts on the respiratory membranes to soothe dry, irritable cough, stuck water (pleurisy, pneumonia) in a generally dry, debilitated, even deteriorative condition. Going deeper, flaxseed nourishes the muscles and tendons, making them supple and limber (Dorothy Hall), also the bones and reproductive organs (Vasant Lad and David Frawley). Today it is also used for its positive cardiovascular effect.

Externally: “The ground seed, when mixed with boiling water, makes a thick mush which is excellent for use in poultices. Any herb

may be added for this purpose, such as smartweed, alum bark, granulated hops, mullein, or any of the other herbs recommended for use in poultices. These herbs mixed and used as a poultice with flaxseed make one of the best poultices for all kinds of old sores, boils, carbuncles, inflammations and tumors" (Jethro Kloss).

TASTE:

sweet, pungent • warm • oily, astringent

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Eyes (poultice).
- Allergies.
- Sore throat.
- Lungs; chronic bronchitis, pleurisy, asthma, pneumonia; soothes cough.
- Gastritis, enteritis, irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulitis, dysentery, diarrhea, colic, spasmodic colitis.
- Chronic constipation.
- Kidney stones; lubricates the passage; nephritis.
- Tendons, muscles; keeps them flexible and supple (external).
- Dupuytren's contracture; thinning of pad of the hand and contracture of tendons in palms near fingers (external).
- Contracture of the extremities (external).
- Tightens loose tendons; fingers, joints, neck (external).
- Burns, after the initial injury, while they are weeping plasma (external).
- Burns, scars, and wounds that cause contracture (external).

- Eczema, psoriasis, dry, itchy skin (dietary supplement for essential fatty acids).
- Abscess, boil (external).
- High blood pressure, high cholesterol, atherosclerosis.
- Systemic lupus erythematosus.
- Strains, sprains (poultice).

PREPARATION, CONTRAINDICATIONS, AND DOSAGE:

May be congesting if there is a torpid condition causing the constipation instead of debility, dryness, and atrophy. Freshly ground meal, milk decoction, paste. Does not store well after grinding; the oils quickly turn rancid and age to become the linseed oil used in painting. Millet and flaxseed porridge is a good low carbohydrate, high protein food (Dorothy Hall). It should not be heated during preparation.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Jethro Kloss, Vasant Lad and David Frawley, Dorothy Hall (4–9).

Lonicera spp. Honeysuckle.

Honeysuckle is a member of the Caprifoliaceae family (which also includes elder) and is represented throughout the northern hemisphere by many species that have naturalized throughout the world. The flowers are very sweet and cooling. They are considered an important medicine in China. Also used in Arabic medicine, they are little known in Western herbalism.

Lonicera japonica is the officinal species in Chinese herbalism; it is widely naturalized in North America. The flower buds are the part

used; they are classified as sweet and cooling and are used to reduce heat in the body, counter toxic heat, cool the blood, and disperse wind and heat. Symptoms include carbuncles, contagious fever with skin eruptions, dysentery, and sore, swollen throat. Research shows that honeysuckle can protect the liver, inhibit influenza and mumps, reduce fat in the blood, and kill bacteria (Lu, 1994, 189).

"Honeysuckle is good for the lungs; asthma; the spleen; provokes urine; aids childbirth; cramps; convulsions; palsy; colds. Ointment of honeysuckle will clear the skin of morphew; freckles; sun burn and other skin discolourings" (Chalid Ottway, 1933, 202). The root, leaves, or flowers are used in Arabic medicine.

Lycopus europaeus. Gypsywort.

This plant is used in Europe as a substitute for the American bugleweed *(Lycopus virginicus)*, on the same indications. It is one of the most invasive plants I have ever come across. The association with gypsies should probably be considered a racial slur.

Malva neglecta, M. sylvestris. Low Mallow, Cheeses.

This common weed can be used as a substitute for marshmallow *(Althaea officinalis)*, though it is not usually considered as powerful. A simple poultice of the widely available leaves are used in folk medicine on infected finger wounds, skin inflammation, insect bites, and bee stings (Menzies-Trull). It draws out inflammation and pus, and is therefore beneficial in teen acne, infected and cystic acne, and boils (Hall). It is also used in traditional country medicine to make a cough syrup. This is excellent for irritable, dry coughs of the larynx and trachea in children (Jane LaForce). It is a mild laxative mucilage for the bowels. William LeSassier recommended it for leaky gut syndrome.

Marrubium vulgare. White Hoarhound.

White hoarhound is a very bitter member of the mint family like its namesake, black hoarhound. Both are covered by a slight down like a "hoarfrost," hence the name. The spelling "horehound" is incorrect but far more common. White hoarhound has a light green color, whereas black hoarhound is darker green. The former is used primarily on the lungs, the latter on the digestion. Marrubium *contains a bitter (marrubiin), tannins, flavonoids, vitamin C, quercetin, sterols, mucilage, alkaloids, volatile oils, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and iron*.

White hoarhound is one of the half dozen grand old cough remedies of European folk and professional medicine, sharing that distinction with such herbs as elecampane, coltsfoot, mullein, and marshmallow. It is difficult to imagine treating respiratory conditions without this powerful committee of pulmonary herbs, though they are improved by the addition of North American plants such as wild cherry, rabbit tobacco, and lobelia.

Marrubium is an old domestic remedy principally used in colds, coughs, and fevers. As a bitter it promotes secretions that expel “abundant thick expectoration” (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 251). This allows for the secretion of new mucus, which contains new immune cells and secretions. Again and again, we see that herbs work, not by “killing germs,” but by changing the environment and allowing the body to do the germ-killing. Meanwhile, the mild tannins astringe and restore the tone of the boggy mucosa. Simultaneously marrubium opens the skin, relieving congestion by bringing fluids out through the periphery. It is useful in nonproductive coughs, pertussis, bronchitis, asthma, and tuberculosis where the catarrh is dried out and adhesive.

Marrubium is indicated in the first tickle of a cold or cough in the back of the throat (Dorothy Hall). This is then followed by increasing soreness and, at some point, an increase in salivation. The saliva wets the tongue on the sides (the liver and gallbladder area in Chinese medicine), flows down the throat, and irritates the larynx and bronchi. It is not often appreciated that excess salivation, like postnasal discharge, can cause a respiratory condition. This is also the case with red clover (Matthew Wood). Later on the excessive secretions dry out, leading to lack of appetite, digestive dryness, dry, harsh coughing, adhesive mucus, and liver and gallbladder sub-secretion. William LeSassier explained the pattern in a different way. White hoarhound is indicated where cold stagnation in the GI causes a backup that discharges through the respiratory membranes, resulting in mucus buildup and coughing. “Aching and fullness is felt through the bottom of the chest,” he remarked. “The liver may feel hard and cold. Typically, some emotional thing sets off the respiratory problem. It is suited to all sorts of different kinds of coughs.”

William Cook (1869, 556) writes, “A cold infusion creates a warm impression through the lungs, favors the ejection of viscid mucus, and sustains the vocal organs in congestion and hoarseness; but it is not a suitable agent to use in dry and irritable coughs, and patients with a tendency to spasmodic asthma often suffer a sense of suffocation on using it. Large quantities sometimes act [as a

laxative] on the bowels." Actually, dry coughs can respond to hoarhound. "A warm infusion acts moderately toward the surface, secures a slight perspiration, promotes the menses where they have been obstructed by recent exposure, relieves hysterical symptoms, and sometimes acts on the kidneys."

London herbalist Paula Grainger informed me that some British herbalists were using marrubium for infertility associated with excess androgenism. This condition can cause mucus to interfere with the descent of the egg through the fallopian tubes and its implantation in the uterus (cf. *Lilium longiflorum*). I also associate excess androgenism with cold, chills and fever, and cold in the liver; this imbalance is often treated by bitters—cf. mugwort, blessed thistle, wild lettuce. I have found white hoarhound to be useful in thin women who gain abdominal fat in their forties and fifties from high androgen. It can materially reduce the abdominal fat deposition. This type of weight gain can be associated with diabetes type II.

Kenner and Requena (2001) cite marrubium as a bitter, pungent remedy that is cooling. This is in line with the Chinese idea that bitters are cooling, but is incorrect. Western tradition, from classical Greek to modern times (see Cook, above), considers it to be warming. This is clear on taking some of the leaf in the mouth. Marrubium is a stimulant—that is, a hot remedy.

TASTE:

bitter • warm • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

stagnation, relaxation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Debilitated condition of the nervous system.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Emotional sensitivity, upset, hysteria.

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory conditions associated with emotional problems and constipation.
- *First tingles of irritation in the throat or nose, in acute head colds*.
- Viscosities in the eyes and ears (drops).
- *Hoarseness, irritation and congestion in the throat*, laryngitis, tracheitis, loss of voice, chronic sore throat.
- *Thick, viscid, heavy phlegm* (combine with orris root, Nicholas Culpeper).
- Chronic *catarrh, chest colds, coughs, croup*, sinusitis, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, pertussis, dyspnea.
- *"All sorts of different kinds of coughs."*
- Dry, unproductive cough; with poor appetite and sluggish digestion.
- Pain and aching through the bottom of the lungs.
- Senile asthma.
- Excess salivation at the beginning of an upper respiratory tract infection.

DIGESTION AND LIVER

- Catarrhal gastritis and enteritis.
- "Cold, hard liver"; jaundice; hepatitis.
- Constipation.
- Worms; associated with poor tone, secretion, and circulation of the mucosa.
- Bacterial enteritis.

HEART

- Arrhythmia, tachycardia.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema.

FEMALE

- Problems associated with excess androgen.
- Amenorrhea; associated with cold, with venous congestion.
- Infertility from mucus in the fallopian tubes and womb (cf. *Lilium*).
- Parturition: warms the uterus, eases labor.
- Postpartum: assists expulsion of the afterbirth.
- Menopause: weight gain in the abdomen in thin women due to androgen.

FEVER

- Fever with lack of perspiration.
- Intermittent chills and fever, influenza, malaria.

SKIN AND WOUNDS

- Dermal ulcers.
- Dog and adder bites (traditional).
- Shingles.

OTHER

- “If the plant be put in new milk and set in a place pestered with flies, it will speedily kill them all” (Fernie).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion of the dried herb. One teaspoonful to 4 ounces of boiling water, cover and steep for 10–20 minutes, sweeten with honey or molasses to increase the soothing property (Dewey).

CAUTIONS:

Extended use can cause hypertension, especially in the elderly (Michael Moore). Can cause irregular heartbeat in some people (Dewey). Large doses are emetic and laxative. Not appropriate in some pregnant women.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Nicholas Culpeper, John William Fyfe (1), Dorothy Hall (4), William LeSassier (2, 3, 9, 11, 15), Dioscorides (22), Wilhelm Pelikan (12, 13, 14, 19, 22), Chalid Ottway (5, 7, 8, 24, 25), William Cook (2, 6, 25), Christopher Menzies-Trull (5–8, 15–17, 20, 22, 27, 28), Matthew Wood (13, 21, 26), Paula Grainger (23), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (18, 19, 20, 22), John Hill (22), W. T. Fernie (32).

Medicago sativa. Alfalfa, Lucerne.

Alfalfa is a clover native to central Asia, long cultivated for animal feed. It is highly alkaline and will grow well only on alkaline soils. It has deep foraging roots that pick up minerals far beneath the surface of the ground. Alfalfa contains bitters (including alkaloids), coumarins, isoflavonoids (including phytoestrogens), protein, vitamins (including A, B_1, B_2, B_3, B_6, B_{12}, C, D, E, F, K, and U), and minerals (including calcium, potassium, iron, and phosphorus).

Many herb books report that the medicinal effects of alfalfa depend upon the large amounts of vitamins and minerals it contains. However, John Heinerman (1994, 1) notes that a scientific writer actually states, “No other herb … shows so many fluctuations in its vitamin and particularly in its mineral contents as does alfalfa.” The medicinal properties more likely depend on the strong alkalinity of the herb. Many problems are due to acidity. Alkalization sedates the nerves and muscles, removes acids from the digestive tract and

internal environment, improving digestion, reducing putrefaction in the gut, and cleansing the internal fluids and tissues.

Bernard Jensen (1979) gives an account of alfalfa as a remedy for the gastrointestinal tract. He combines it with peppermint to make a tonic for the stomach. With its complex and opposite flavors, bitter and sweet, alfalfa is both stimulating and regulating to stomach secretion, like meadowsweet. Jensen also recommends alfalfa, in tablet form, as a remedy for the colon. The fibers exercise the muscles of the intestinal walls and are slightly laxative. They build up the tone and remove toxic accumulations, bacteria, and pockets (diverticulum). He recommends 4–8 tablets at each meal, chewed or broken up. In addition, he suggests use of remedies to increase digestion and decrease toxic gas (probably caused by the wrong flora in the colon). He suggests goldenseal as a good herb to use with alfalfa—it nicely improves the digestive secretions he is looking for. This method, Jensen says, will take about a year to rebuild a run-down gastrointestinal tract. It is suited to ulcers of the surface as well as of the mucosa.

Australian herbalist Dorothy Hall (1988) gives an account of the constitution calling for alfalfa. These people are busy, on the go, impatient. They are constantly aware of the passage of time and frequently complain that they don't have enough of it. The nervous system is irritable. They usually suffer from poor protein digestion. This leads to irritation of the digestive tract, with acid buildup and secretion of mucus to coat the irritated tissue. There may also be difficulty metabolizing protein, leading to internal inflammation, acidity, catarrh, and allergies. The alfalfa person is unusually sensitive to insect stings, resulting in swellings, red welts, itching, and irritability.

Richard Lucas (1981) gives a good account of the applications of alfalfa in arthritis, rheumatism (fibromyalgia), rheumatoid arthritis, and back pain.

TASTE:

sweet, bitter, earthen • cooling

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, torpor

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Busy, conscious of the clock, on the go, “not enough time.”
- Nervousness, irritability, insomnia.

HEAD

- Itchy scalp.

RESPIRATION

- Acute affections of the upper respiratory tract; nosebleed, hay fever, allergies, sore throat.
- Chronic, debilitating cough of tuberculosis, pertussis; as a nutritive support.

DIGESTION

- Poor appetite, bad breath, tooth decay, acidic saliva, fermentation of digestate.
- Acid taste on the tongue; in the elderly.
- Stomach acidity, bloating, distention, pain.
- Intolerance of rich, proteinaceous foods.
- *Peptic ulcers*.
- Flatulence, catarrh in the colon, rectal itching.
- Diverticulosis (bowel pockets); constipation; sluggish bowels; rectal itch. Thought to prevent colon cancer by cleansing the bowel.
- Colitis.

HEART, KIDNEYS, AND BLADDER

- Heart disease, high blood pressure.
- Excess water retention, weight gain.
- Gravel.

FEMALE

- Pregnancy: morning sickness.
- Lactation: promotes milk quantity and quality.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis, bursitis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, muscle cramps.
- Pain, swelling, and stiffness in joints, back.

SKIN

- External ulcers that are not resolving; putrid sores; proud flesh (cf. *Inula*).
- Skin: irritable, itching, rashes, changing location frequently; reacts badly to insect bites.
- Boils.

OTHER

- Hemostatic; too much bleeding or too little; preventative for strokes.
- Anemia.
- Supportive “when taking sulfa or antibiotic drugs or when fasting” (Gagnon).
- Convalescence; to buffer the blood from nitrogenous acids caused by tissue breakdown.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Large doses are most commonly used (Lucas). The herb is often used in tablet form (2–4 with meals). Dose of the tincture: 15–30 drops, up to 4x/day (Daniel Gagnon). The tea liberates the calcium for absorption through the stomach and higher GI, bypassing the

parathyroid-controlled usual mechanisms for calcium absorption in the gut, thereby making it easier to get calcium into the system (Michael Moore).

CAUTIONS:

Alfalfa frequently causes mild side effects, including bloating, gas, and diarrhea, when it begins to work on the system. Long-term use can cause reactivation of quiescent SLE (systemic lupus erythematosus) (Talalaj and Czechowicz).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Alexander Blackwood, Ann Wigmore, John Christopher, Dorothy Hall (1, 2, 3, 7, 22), John Heinerman, Bernard Jensen, Christopher Menzies-Trull (4, 5), Daniel Gagnon (13, 25, 26), Richard Lucas (19, 20), Michael Moore (27).

Melaleuca alternifolia. Tee Tree Oil, Cajeput Oil.

This agent is a tree native to Australia. It was known in the nineteenth century as cajeput oil. It was largely forgotten for a long time in the West, then reentered the limelight and under the name "tea tree" or "melaleuca" became something of a fad herb in the closing decades of the twentieth century. It is high in volatile oils, sesquiterpenes, and monoterpenes.

Melaleuca is a powerful antiseptic, antibiotic, antiparasitic, and antifungal. It can be taken internally only in very small doses. Dorothy Hall (1988, 114) recommends several drops to a flat teaspoonful, at most, diluted in water or fruit juice, up to once a day. This is for parasites, amebic dysentery, candida, and the like. However, usually melaleuca is used externally in a cream, gel, or oil

(up to 80% strength to prevent skin sensitivities) for abscess, acne, wounds, tinea pedis, ringworm, pediculosis, dermal parasites, warts.

It must be remembered that "killing critters" is not the best way to deal with any of these infestations. True cure comes from changing the environment, so that it does not play host to microorganisms in the first place. For instance, I recently saw a case of ringworm on the backs of the hands and up onto the wrists. The skin was cool and clammy, indicating an excess of watery perspiration, but it was coarse from a lack of oil. I gave sweet leaf *(Monarda fistulosa)* to reverse the perspiration, and hawthorn berry *(Crataegus spp.)* because it increases oil on the backs of the hands and wrists. The condition was quickly cured. This woman could have put melaleuca on until she was blue in the face; it would not have cured because the underlying condition was the source of the problem, not the critter.

Melissa officinalis. Lemon Balm.

Melissa is a member of the mint family native to Europe but widely cultivated for its pleasant lemon scent and taste. It is one of the few aromatic mints that is sour and cooling. It occupied a position of considerable importance in European domestic medicine for the last several centuries. Until recently, many households had a bottle of klosterfrau melissengeist *or "spirit of melissa" on hand as a basic nerve sedative. Melissa contains flavonoids, triterpenes, and volatile oils (including citronella)*.

Lemon balm has a sour taste, as its name indicates—it is one of the few sour mints. Like most sour plants, it is cooling and sedative. It combines this property with the typical nerve-calming powers of the mint family to make a strong, but safe and simple sedative. These powers are much more marked when the plant is tinctured fresh. A tincture of fresh melissa should be on the shelf in every household as a general sedative.

Melissa is a general remedy in some cases and a specific in others. Although it will generally sedate most people, it is particularly suited to conditions of sympathetic excess, hyperadrenalism, or hyperthyroidism. It is especially indicated when these tendencies are associated with the stomach or heart. Heart palpitations, atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure, and even aneurysm have found a treatment in melissa. It is sometimes combined with *Lycopus* in hyperthyroidism or is specific by itself. Keynote symptoms include sweaty palms (an indication for nervousness or sympathetic excess), a rapid or superficial pulse, and an elongated, pointed, red tongue.

In addition to being cooling, sedative, and calming, melissa is diaphoretic, so it is applicable in fevers with nervousness and in the fevers of young children. It is also used in nervous depression following exhaustive fevers and for convalescence when the digestion has been long irritated.

TASTE:

sour • cool

TISSUE STATE:

excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Nervousness, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia*.
- Debility and weakness of nervous origin.
- Nervous headache (cold infusion).

RESPIRATION

- Spasm in the upper respiratory centers, convulsive coughing, asthma.

THYROID AND HEART

- Anxiety and palpitations; *hyperthyroidism*.
- *Heart palpitations, atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure, associated with nervousness*.
- *Pulse rapid or superficial*.

DIGESTION

- *Elongated, pointed, red tongue*.
- Dyspepsia, upset stomach, flatulence.
- Nervous indigestion (hot tea after a meal).
- Nausea and vomiting.

FEVERS

- Recent colds and fevers (hot tea, to promote perspiration).
- Acute febrile conditions in children.
- Depression following exhaustive fevers and long irritation of the digestion.

FEMALE

- Conception: said to promote.
- Menstruation: deficient and painful.
- Leucorrhea.
- Menopause: hot flashes (combine with peach leaf).
- Excessive sexual excitement.

MALE

- Impotence (“a sovereign remedy … from times of yore”).

SKIN

- Burns, blisters, herpetic sores, stings, and burns; burning, nettling pain (external).
- *Sweaty palms*.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

“Fresh balm is much better than dry, for it loses its fragrancy in drying” (John Hill, 1740, 70). The tea or tincture should be made from the fresh leaves. Dosage of the tincture can be small (1–3 drops) to large (10–30 drops). The oil can also be used. Extremely Safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Humbart Santillo, Rudolf Weiss, Nalda Gosling (14), W. T. Fernie (3, 10), Ben Charles Harris (12), Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff (4, 16, 17), Wilhelm Pelikan (11, 14, 19), Sondra Boyd (18), Matthew Wood (7, 8, 22), Donald Law (20).

Mentha piperita. Peppermint.

Peppermint is an old culinary and medicinal herb native to the Old World but widely naturalized and used in North America. It is usual among the mints for its nervine properties, but unusual because of its paradoxical hot and cold properties. It has a cool taste, but stimulating effects. It possesses many active ingredients, of which the most important are flavonoids, acetic acid, tannins, resin, gum, triterpenes, and essential oils (menthol, 50–75%). The menthol is often used separately in liniments.

Peppermint preparations “have been popular from the days of our grandmothers for the relief of colic in the bowels, or for the stomach-ache of flatulent indigestion,” writes W. T. Fernie (1914, 3).

Peppermint tastes cool but has a stimulating and warming aftertaste. This paradox helps to explain its physical properties. Peppermint is traditionally used as a remedy for fever and chills, or an admixture of heat and cold. It is also used to reduce “wind” in the intestines, which can arise in combination with cramping, often a symptom associated with chills. Thus, the primary uses of

peppermint in fever, chills, flu, and indigestion are explained by its taste. Scientific medicine and herbalism explain the action of peppermint by the fact that menthol is antispasmodic and analgesic. Thus, it settles the stomach and opens the sweat pores and peripheral circulation through relaxation.

Peppermint "cures the cholic often almost instantaneously," wrote Sir John Hill (1740, 264). It "is mostly used for flatulence and wind colic; but may be employed for other sudden pains and crampings through the abdomen" (William Cook, 1869, 563). It is contraindicated in hot, dry conditions of the colon, writes Finley Ellingwood (1918, 280). "In painful bowel complaints with inflammation—pain on pressure, tongue dry, with reddened tip and edges, peppermint should not be given." Rather, it is indicated "where the food tends to ferment in the stomach and bowels, it may be given in doses of three to five minims in capsules, as an antiseptic to prevent fermentation and promote digestion."

Peppermint is traditionally used in colds and fevers brought on by sudden exposure to cold. Yarrow, elder, and peppermint comprise a time honored formula for colds, fevers, and flus. "Osiander states in his textbook, *Popular Remedies*, 1838, that he found mint tea to be exceedingly valuable in the treatment of influenza. He used mint tea during the terrific grippe epidemics of 1838 and 1836" (Harris, 1972, 144).

Peppermint and menthol are highly active substances that can artificially overrelax the nerves and muscles. Eva Graf (1978, 188) notes that peppermint can relax the peristaltic action of the intestines so that they don't have the tone they should. This can happen merely from taking the tea daily for three or four weeks. She observes that this effect will usually reverse if the tea is stopped. Because of this it is not appropriate to take peppermint right after a meal, when the peristalsis needs to be active. She uses spearmint, instead of peppermint, in treatment of infants, because of its milder action.

Although its properties are primarily cooling/relaxing, peppermint has a secondary warming/stimulating effect. This travels through the lymphatics of the body, which are a subtle

pathway not so easily observed as the nerves and muscles. Through this mechanism, peppermint reaches into the depths of the organism and then out to the periphery, where we first noticed its activities in fever, flu, and stomachache.

Eva Graf (1978, 188) noticed the lymphatic application of peppermint. She considered it to be a specific for congested lymphatics in gathered breast in mastitis. Dr. Dietrich Gümbel (1993, 205) credits peppermint oil with the ability to move the waters of the body through the slow-moving lymphatic ducts and interstitial spaces between tissues, where there is very little pumping action. Thus, it increases the capacity of absorption of the lymphatic organs in the mesentery surrounding the intestines. By improving the uptake of digestate, alimentary stasis is relieved. Cooling fluids and nourishing food are brought into the body. By increasing the flow of water through the lymphatics peppermint has a cooling, moistening effect on hot, dry conditions in the interior and periphery of the body. (It is not, as mentioned above, indicated for hot, dry conditions of the gut, however.) Reaching the largest center of the lymphatic system, peppermint oil stimulates the spleen, improving the breakdown of old red blood cells, combing the blood for impurities, and increasing white cell production. Thus, it ultimately has a restorative, regenerative influence on the immune system.

As the absorptive effect of peppermint oil moves out to the periphery, it relieves hot, dry conditions of the joints and skin. It moves more fluids into the hard-to-reach connective tissue, which lies outside the normal circulation of the blood. This not only strengthens connective tissue, improving its “swellability,” but improves the immune function, which is vested in this tissue. It acts on the corium, the middle layer of the skin, the connective tissue anchor of the dermis, making it more flush with water, increasing the function in the immune cells in this area. It is therefore, according to Gümbel, a remedy for dried-up, atrophic skin, especially that injured by the effect of light, and for dry, irritated joints. By increasing the immune capacity of the periphery, peppermint becomes a remedy in influenza.

Dr. J. V. Cerney (1976, 72) records a dramatic case. “Mary McK. had had heartburn for years. She complained of acid coming up from her stomach to cause a burning sensation in her throat. She continued to have this discomfort despite all the prescribed anti-acids and other potions. The problem didn’t interfere too much with her activity but it did make her feel miserable day after day. She got to the point where she didn’t want to eat any more because food made her feel worse. This pyrosis, or burning, simply got worse and when I saw her the burning in her throat was already interfering with her speech. Her throat was inflamed and swollen. I’d never seen a case go so far. In fact, I suspected it was more likely to be a drug allergy than pyrotic in origin. I started her on peppermint tea. The first three days there were no appreciable results. Then a mashed fresh peppermint leaf poultice was placed on her tummy. That’s when results made themselves apparent. I started her on soft foods and within days she was her smiling self,” and remained on a diet and regular doses of peppermint tea.

TASTE:

pungent • at first warming, then cooling • stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervousness, insomnia, dizziness, fainting.

RESPIRATION

- Increases respiration and oxygenation.

DIGESTION

- *People who are drowsy after a meal.*
- *Headaches associated with digestive tension.*
- Mouth sores, sore throats.
- *Stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, heartburn, flatulent colic, belching, hiccough.*
- *Spasmodic pain in the bowels, griping, diarrhea with abdominal pain.*
- *Gas and bloating after a meal.*
- *Palpitation from indigestion and gas.*
- Gallbladder colic.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- "Scanty secretion of urine, frequent desire to pass water" (Rolla Thomas).

FEMALE

- Menstruation: colic, cramp.
- Pregnancy: indigestion and morning sickness (tea, after the first trimester).
- Lactation: mastitis.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Muscle tension, spasm, cramp (oil, externally; or poultice).
- Spasms and convulsions in infants (small internal doses).
- Hot, dry joints.

SKIN

- Shingles, herpes (cf. *Melissa, Tilia, Prunus serotina*, homeopathic *Ranunculus bulbosus*).

FEVER

- Colds and flus of the chilly variety and fevers of the hot type.
- Measles; brings eruptions to the surface.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infuse dried or fresh mint leaves, 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoonful per cup, in boiled water; serve hot, warm, or cold. Peppermint oil is used as a digestive aid. Dose of the tincture: 10 drops to 1 dram in 4 ounces of water (Thomas).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Flower Essence Society (3), J. V. Cerney (6), Rolla Thomas (12), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (20), Eva Graf (15).

Mentha pulegium. European Pennyroyal.

See Hedeoma pulegioides, American Pennyroyal, in the volume on American plants.

Mentha spicata. Spearmint.

Spearmint has properties similar to those of peppermint—it is a stimulant and antispasmodic—but it is more gentle. It contains less menthol, and more carvone, also found in dill and caraway (Michael Moore, 2003).

Samuel Thomson (1841, 682) comments that spearmint "expels wind from the stomach, and promotes perspiration. It is an excellent article to settle the stomach, and stop vomiting." Wooster Beach (1849, 664) used it especially for "suppression of urine" and "gravely affections, etc."

Michael Moore (2003, 236) renders a perfect and artistic account of spearmint. "The main value of spearmint is its almost complete lack of toxicity, allowing even the sickest person to tolerate the tea. It is this feebleness that makes it so useful. Soothing to the stomach and a mild diuretic and diaphoretic, it has mild vasodilating characteristics, imparting a pleasant, warm glow to the drinker."

Eva Graf (1978, 119–20) did not use peppermint for infants because it was so powerful, so she used spearmint. “It seems to work more with the stomach than with the whole intestinal tract. It also has antispasmodic qualities.… You would be better able to use spearmint right after eating than peppermint. Spearmint seems to help stimulate digestive enzymes and work with digestion of protein in a really positive way.

“Spearmint seems to be really effective for people who need to cool out emotionally. In that sense, it is for those acute times. It can be used in hysterias, for children who are upset, in any of that type of situation.”

Spearmint, or *yerba buena*, is the traditional tea given to birthing mothers in New Mexican and Hispanic usage, notes Moore (2003). It is mildly astringent and toning in postpartum.

Menyanthes trifoliata. Bogbean, Bog Trefoil, Buckbean.

Bogbean is a member of the bogbean family. It enjoys a circumpolar distribution, hence is found in North America and Europe, where we find it in cold, northern bogs. Its uses come to us from European folk medicine. It is “an herb better known by the common people than among the apothecaries, but of great virtue,” writes John Hill (1740, 93). The leaves and roots are used; they contain numerous anthraquinones, bitter alkaloids, phenols, and tannins. This well explains the long use of this plant as a digestive tonic.

Buckbean, with its impressive collection of bitters, purgative anthraquinones, and tannins, is perfectly poised to stimulate a sluggish digestive tract and stagnant lymphatics conjoined with clogged kidneys and skin. The “main influence is expended on the glandular structures, promoting the flow of bile and urine, acting fairly on the bowels and skin, and in large quantities sometimes proving emetic, as boneset does. The principal use made of it is as a tonic in company with alterants for such maladies as dropsy,

scrofula, jaundice, and general biliousness. Considerable doses will so effectually purge the liver, gall cyst and bowels, at the same time sustaining the strength and the outward circulation, that it is a quite popular remedy for intermittents" (Cook, 1869, 565).

Menyanthes is believed to stimulate both the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic, thus normalizing imbalances in the nervous regulation of the digestion that would especially result from malaria or intermittent fevers (alternating chills and fever). It opens the lymphatic drainage, releasing pelvic lymphatic congestion. It also improves secretion of the skin, which takes a burden off the kidneys, and stimulates the kidneys themselves to remove waste products. Thus, it is "the most serviceable of all herbal tonics" (Fernie, 1914, 36). "With this remedy the author has cured some cases of scrofula and rheumatism of very long standing" (Slack, 1919, 106). Recent research has shown that it has a possible influence in glomerulonephritis.

"Bogbean has a long history of use in rheumatism. The bogbean person often has pain in the kidney region that may later affect the legs, knees, and feet. There may be heat and swelling in the joints, that are improved with movement. Gouty rheumatism is a classic bogbean!

"Sciatica pain becomes worse as the body congests and stagnates with old acids and waste. Water retention is reduced by making the lymphatic system more efficient.

"In the negative state, the bogbean person cannot climb the stairs. Repeated trips to the chiropractor only give temporary relief. They need to walk to keep the lymphatics moving and the kidneys eliminating. In this state, they crave meat and yet are not thirsty, a sure recipe for kidney damage. Pain killers simply overload them more [and leave the basic condition untreated], resulting in kidney stones, backache, sciatica, and muscle pain" (Prairie Deva, quoted by Rogers, 2000, 135).

Buckbean is used for shingles. A working man "had an eruption of painful little blisters along his lower ribs on his right side. They followed in a line along his ribs and became agonizingly painful to the point where he couldn't do his job." He was completely cured

using buckbean leaf tea, 1 ounce to a pint of boiling water, 4 tablespoonfuls 3x/day (J. V. Cerney, 1976, 67).

TASTE:

bitter

TISSUE STATE:

stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Mental confusion, lack of humor, aversion to small amusements (flower essence).

HEAD

- Migraine, associated with digestive stagnation.
- Eyes; “early stages of amaurotic paralysis of the retina” (3–4 drops of the tincture in cold water).

RESPIRATION

- Wheezing, asthmatic congestion.

DIGESTION

- Dyspepsia, chronic, sluggish digestion, constipation.
- Hemorrhoids.
- Cold abdomen and extremities.
- Swollen glands, sluggish lymphatic drainage.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema.
- Glomerulonephritis.

FEMALE

- Menstrual irregularities; pelvic congestion.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Chronic arthritic and rheumatic conditions; fibromyalgia, gout, lumbago; achy joints (internal, external).

SKIN

- Dry, flaky skin, eczema, psoriasis (combine, *Solidago, Mahonia*).
- Herpetic pain, festering sores, shingles.

FEVER

- Intermittent and remittent fevers; regular or irregular chills and fevers.

OTHER

- Epilepsy (1 wineglassful, 3x/day).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

"The leaves of Buckbean are to be gathered before the stalks appear for flowering, and are to be dried; the powder of them will cure agues, but their great use is against the rheumatism: for this purpose they are to be given for a continuance of time in infusion, or in the manner of tea" (John Hill, 1740, 94). Cold infusion: 1 teaspoonful of fresh or dried leaf in a cup of warm water, set overnight. Dose: 1 fluid ounce every 3–4 hours (Rogers). Tincture: fresh roots and leaves. Powdered root or leaf: 1–3 grams as a tonic. "Small doses tone and larger ones cause drainage. Go slow!" (Rogers). Infuse roots in wine. Root oil: collect fresh, pulverize, cover with an equal quantity of olive oil, sit warm for a week with daily shaking, strain and use for arthritic and muscular pain (Rogers).

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Aggravates acute diarrhea and irritates colitis due to excitation.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, W. T. Fernie (3), Richard Hool (7), Robert Dale Rogers, J. V. Cerney (14), Prairie Deva (1), John Hill (12).

Momordica charantia. Bittermelon.

Bittermelon is a member of the pumpkin family widely grown in the tropics as a food and medicine. It is native to Asia, but has been introduced to Africa and tropical America. It is used in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine for cold, depressed conditions of the tissues. It contains such strong antitumor properties that it is used both to fight cancer and as an abortifacient in China. Recent studies have confirmed its traditional use in Ayurveda to treat type II diabetes. It contains an insulin-like substance (charantin) that keeps the sugar in solution in the blood longer and helps the cells pick up more sugar. It sensitizes the cells and the sense of taste to sugar. It is the original, organic source of the protease inhibitors used to fight AIDS. I have seen the original patents myself, which name the plant.

At an early date bittermelon was brought to the New World. Dr. William Salmon (1710, 42) testifies to this use from his sojourn in the "West Indies," which at least included South Carolina. "We in the West-India's in this case, where the constipation is great, give a strong decoction of the bitter Gourd, or bitter Squash made in water, which effectually does the cure at once, if given in the beginning of the disease: pulp of Colocynthis here [in London] will do the same." He is referring to colic or bellyache with constipation.

TASTE:

bitter and pungent

TISSUE STATES:

tension, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Type II diabetes.
- Kidney stones.
- Intestinal worms, parasites.
- Diarrhea.
- Constipation with colic.
- Anemia.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Juice of the fresh immature fruit is used—the mature fruit is poisonous. The dose is 2 ounces a day.

Nepeta cataria. Catnip.

Catnip is a mint native to Europe but widely naturalized in North America around old farms and homesteads. It possesses compounds that break down into nepetalactone, a substance similar to the valepotriates found in valerian (hence the acrid flavor) and essential oils (carvacrol and thymol, typical of the mint family).

Catnip is relaxant with both stimulating and cooling properties (cf. peppermint). It relaxes muscle spasm, especially in the smooth muscles of the intestines, and opens the pores of the skin to promote

diaphoresis and release fever. It is especially indicated for infants and children, although it is also useful for adults. It is specific for infantile colic and fever (which often occur at the same time). The infant flexes the legs upward. The tension, pain, and anxiety are accompanied by a "pressing upward" sensation from the stomach. However, the symptoms mostly go downward (cf. lemon balm, where the symptoms go upward from the stomach). In adults catnip is beneficial for hiatal hernia, menstrual headache, cramp, and colic.

A mental profile for catnip has been developed by several practitioners. William LeSassier explains that it is for the "quiet child" who never says anything, "internalizes stuff, and is closed down." An Irish practitioner notes that it should be thought of for children "when trouble is suspected at home." Elisabeth Janos collected folklore to the effect that it is beneficial for hyperactive children. It has a reputation for children who are mean or cruel. Here we might think of its influence on cats—catnip brings out their cruelty.

TASTE:

acrid, pungent • moist, cool • resinous

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, depression, excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Infants; nervous, fretful; intestinal colic, constipation, and fever.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Children; "the quiet child," internalizes experiences; trouble in the home; overactive, nervous, restless, mean-spirited.
- "Worry worts."

- “Held in people with pent-up tension; especially tension held in the stomach.”

HEAD

- Nervous headache; menstrual headache; sleeplessness.
- Swollen under the eyes.

DIGESTION

- “Tends to internalize stress to the stomach.”
- Congestion, pain, and anxiety in the stomach; pain up to the vagus nerve.
- Pain in the stomach, mimicking heart attack.
- Anxiety attacks felt in the stomach, rising upward.
- Hiatal hernia; sensation of extreme pressure upward against the diaphragm; hiccough.
- Intestinal colic; draws the legs up for relief.
- Colicky gas pains, relieved by burping, belching.
- Spasm, pain ascending from the stomach or uterus.
- Motion sickness (mild palliative); nervous to be on airplane.
- “Does sedate HCl production, eases an over acid stomach caused by nerves.”
- “Balances coffee jitters.”

FEMALE

- Menstrual cramps (combine with leonurus).
- Lactation: sweetens the milk.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Lessens fatigue from muscular exertion.

SKIN

- Skin irritation; hives, measles, fever, acne, scarlatina; brings rashes to the surface.

OTHER

- General first aid for infants and children.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The herb is gathered before flowering and prepared fresh as a tea, or fresh in tincture. It loses properties on drying. To make a poultice boil the fresh leaves (covered), thicken with corn meal (Daniel Cobb, 1846, 2:231).

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

“Do not use for extended periods of time with small children. It has an almost narcotic effect when overused” (Darryl Patton, Tommie Bass).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1, 2), Jack Ritchason (6), William LeSassier (2, 3, 4, 7–13, 15, 16, 17, 21), Elisabeth Janos (2), John William Fyfe (1, 12, 14), Rosari Kingston (2), Tommie Bass (5, 15), Aviva Romm (18).

Nigella sativa, N. damascena, N. arvensis. Black Cumin.

The ancient Egyptians used black cumin as a medicine and food, both of which practices persist in the Middle East today—it is a common ingredient of curry. Galen recommended nigella. Mohammed extolled its effects above all other herbs, saying, "Black cumin is good for all ailments except death." This is verified by the fact that it is an immune normalizer, useful for both lack and excess of reaction to stress. It is a member of the buttercup family, an annual native to the Mediterranean and Middle East, but easily grown in gardens. The seeds are high in essential fatty acids that are the source of a pressed oil that has long been used in medicine. It belongs to the same pharmacological group as evening primrose, black currant, and borage, all of which are high in essential fatty acids (EFAs). Each, however, has somewhat different properties.

Black cumin seed was classified by the Greek physicians as hot and dry in the third degree, meaning it warms up the center to drive humors, toxins, and heat to the surface, thins the humors to improve their passage, and opens the skin to release them. Hence, it was traditionally used (1) as a warming, stimulating, and bitter carminative to raise the digestive fire, (2) as an anti-inflammatory, and (3) as an expectorant, or mucolytic. Remedies in this category are also beneficial when there are putrefaction and toxins in the bloodstream. In addition, it was used externally as an emollient to soften hardness of the skin.

In modern terms black cumin is an immune normalizer, which means that it can act on both "hot and cold," on inflammation and lack of reaction. Thus, it balances the inflammatory suppressant side of the adrenal cortex associated with high cortisone (high blood sugar, digestive heat, impotence) and on the other it controls excessive immune reaction associated with high aldosterone and androgens (hyperactivity, allergies, asthma, gum disease, food allergies, inflammatory and degenerative arthritis, skin eruptions).

The hard little black seeds are a signature for the kidneys, if we follow the Chinese designation of color and organ. They resemble

gromwell seeds, also an old specific for kidney stones, and are used for that purpose.

TASTE:

warm • oily

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, stagnation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Hyperactivity in children.
- Depression associated with PMS and hormonal changes.
- Forgetfulness of old age, difficulty concentrating (combine with myrrh).
- Fainting spells.
- Insomnia (strong decoction of the seed).

HEAD

- Loss of hair and dandruff (external).
- Headache, associated with hormones.
- Eyes irritated, itchy, watery; with headache, nasal congestion.
- Eyestrain (external, on temples).
- Ears; middle ear infections (internal, external).
- Gum infection.

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory allergies and susceptibility (begin treatment in January and continue throughout the season); sneezing, frequent colds, constant runny nose, hay fever, conjunctivitis, flu, colds (internal; inhalation).
- Sinusitis (roasted seed; tied in a cloth and the odor inhaled).

- Bronchitis, stubborn, annoying, hacking cough, whooping cough, shortness of breath, bronchial asthma, sore chest (internal; inhalation; syrup; foot bath for prevention).

DIGESTION

- Indigestion, gastritis, flatulence, sharp, severe gas pains after eating (with milk and honey).
- Diarrhea, with significant weight loss.
- Hemorrhoids; itching, bleeding (cream).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Inflammation of the liver, gallstones.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Kidney stones, difficult passage of urine, dropsy (pain relief and cure).

FEMALE

- Premenstrual syndrome, menopausal complaints, headaches with hormonal component and depression.

MALE

- Impotence (mix with honey and pepper).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis and rheumatism; inflammatory and degenerative conditions; stiffness, swelling, pain, redness.
- “Frequently recurring, inexplicable aches” (Schleicher and Saleh).

SKIN

- Varicose veins, varicose ulcers (oil, 5 drops in water, 4–5x/day).

- Skin diseases; acne, eczema, psoriasis, fungus, nettle rash, itching, impetigo, urticaria, warts, neurodermatitis, lice, parasites (internal and external).
- Fistula, ulcers (external).
- Contusions, bruises, effusions of blood, wounds (external).
- Insect bites.

OTHER

- Diabetes type II.
- Deafness (powdered seeds).
- Exhaustion, convalescence (combine with royal jelly).
- Candida.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The seeds or the pressed oil of the seeds. Often used externally.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Large doses of the seeds have been used to bring on the menses, so black cumin should be used with caution in pregnancy. It is a member of the Ranunculaceae (buttercup) family, which includes several abortifacients.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Sylvia Luetjohann *(The Healing Power of Black Cumin)*, Peter Schleicher and Mohamed Saleh *(Black Cumin: The Magical Egyptian Herb for Allergies, Asthma, and Immune Disorders)*, Galen, Chalid Ottway, Hakim Chishti.

Ocimum basilicum. Basil.

Basil has been used since the most ancient times as a culinary herb and medicinal plant. It is sacred in India (Ocimum sanctum) *and taboos about its use are common in the older Western literature. The name basilicum (Greek* basilicon*) derives from the Greek word for a dragon* (basilisk) *or a king* (basileus). *It removes heat and toxins from the bloodstream, liver, portal circulation, and intestines. It could be said that it rules the fiery basilisk. It contains flavonoids, polyphenolic acids, triterpenes, ursolic acid, volatile oils, mucilage, and vitamins A and C*.

The pungent volatile oils help basil open the skin and lungs, relax the digestive tract, and purge the blood of heat and toxins. It detoxifies through the skin by diaphoresis and removes mucus from the lungs, so it is serviceable in colds, flus, and acute respiratory conditions. It stimulates the appetite and digestion, removing stagnant food and flatulence. It also penetrates to the deeper regions of the organism to detoxify the blood, liver, portal circulation,

spleen, and intestines. “Basil appears to dissolve and liberate for excretion, toxic lipophilic compounds which are stored in body fat deposits. It especially neutralizes past (and long past) damage to the body from recreational marijuana use” (Brent Davis, DC). It can also be beneficial for removing heavy metals (Eva Graf).

Basil was traditionally used to detoxify from cannabis in India and the Middle East. This fact was noted by Brent Davis. He began to use basil with great success in patients with long histories of marijuana consumption. The typical patient suffers from a fear that their health is permanently compromised, about which they feel a great deal of emotional distress. They are suffering from “neurological disorganization.” The nervous system is incapable of self-correction, despite the right spinal manipulation, the patient is gradually getting worse, and they suffer a lack of musculoligamentous tone, or “ligamentous looseness,” so that their bodies cannot hold manipulations. In addition, Davis recommends basil as a detoxifier for removing medical and chemical drugs that sequester themselves in fat cells.

Nervine effects are paradoxical. Research by French doctors M. Cadéac and A. Meunier showed that basil first stimulates, then relaxes, the brain and nervous system. This is demonstrated in traditional herbalism: basil is used in Mediterranean countries before bed, for insomnia, and on waking, to enhance alertness (Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli). It seems to work on both the sympathetic and the parasympathetic sides of the autonomic nervous system—an unusual and valuable fact. Hence it has been called an “adaptogenic tonic” for the autonomic (Christopher Menzies-Trull). Likewise, it can be either cooling or heating. This explains its use for tuning up the gallbladder and helping in recovery from influenzas and intermittent chills/fever, where the periodic chills wear out the nervous system and gallbladder reflexes. It also improves the operation of the liver.

The improvement in bone and connective tissue healing and in immunity suggests that it may improve androgen function. Low sex drive is a problem in chronic marijuana use. John Hill (1740, 75) writes, “No simple is more effectual for gently promoting the

menses, and for removing those complaints which naturally attend their stoppage."

TASTE:

pungent • cooling and heating

TISSUE STATES:

depression, torpor

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Depression, melancholy, nervous tension.
- Insomnia (bedtime tea for sleep).

HEAD

- *Headaches* associated with cold, indigestion, nervous tension.
- Earache.
- Poor eyesight.

RESPIRATION

- Head cold, sinus infection, sinus headache, sinus drainage, acute fever.
- Hay fever, allergies, pollen allergies (1–2 teaspoonfuls of basil tea in apple cider).
- Catarrhal accumulation in the lungs; cough, whooping cough, croup, asthma.

DIGESTION

- Catarrh in the stomach; vomiting; enteritis; parasites.
- Flatulence.

FEMALE AND MALE

- Suppressed menses (hot tea).
- Low sex drive.
- Low milk production.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Broken bones, take a long time to heal.
- Rheumatism (external, palliative for the pain).

FEVER

- Influenza (intermittent fever/chills); aftereffects, residual cold, wiped out, exhausted after, lingering (basil tea).
- Fever, intermittent (chills/fever); with autonomic disorder; constantly yawning and stretching during the chills; spasms in the extremities, violent electric-like shocks in the nerves, violent chills and shivering.
- Fever; thirst increases with rise in temperature, flashes of heat from face, eyes, mouth.
- Fever; scanty sweat in axilla, neck, shoulders, and chest.

EXTERNAL

- Snake bites and insect stings (external).
- Fresh basil juice as a direct application on fungal lesions on the skin.

OTHER

- Results of past use of marijuana; including neurological disorganization; complex hormonal dysregulation, infertility; extreme aggravation of premenstrual syndrome; confounding symptoms associated with chronic structural complaints, instability; ligamentous laxity.
- Hypoglycemia.
- Heavy metal toxicity (combine with cloves).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The mature flower head contains the most complete representation of the properties (Brent Davis). The infusion is made from a pinch of the dried or bruised fresh tops. Pour a cup of boiling water over a teaspoonful of the herb and steep for 15 minutes. Flavor with honey or lemon. The tincture can also be used. The dose is 5–60 drops, 3x/day. Oil of basil is used to build up the cortisol side of the adrenal cortex.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Despite Nicholas Culpeper's assertion that basil will grow "scorpions of the mind," it is usually considered an edible food.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Jethro Kloss (20), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (3), Donald Law (10), Hakim Chishti (1, 5, 10, 15, 16), Eva and Eugene Graf (6, 7, 14, 16, 22, 24), John Hill (11), Brent Davis (22), Ben Charles Harris (9, 23), Yadubir Sinha (*Ocimum sanctum:* 17–19).

Olea europaea. Olive.

The olive tree has been used since antiquity for food, fuel, and medicine. The oil is an extremely important food product and is also used in herbalism as a base for oils, salves, and creams.

"This oil was very extensively used by the Roman physicians as an external application in the cure of diseases. Celsus, Galen, and Aëtius were much in the habit of employing oily frictions; and have left us some excellent observations in relation to the cases in which

they are applicable" (John Eberle, 1834, 2:460). Such "frictions" or warming massages "have a considerable tendency to excite the activity of the absorbents"—that is, lymphatics. They were especially used for watery accumulations such as dropsy, ascites, and anasarca. The oil lubricates, softens, nourishes, and unkinks. Still widely used as a massage oil.

The most common internal use of olive oil today is as a "gallbladder flush" to remove gallstones. This method is mentioned as far back as the late nineteenth century, both in Europe and North America (Fernie, Ellingwood). The usual method is to eat apples for several days (or fresh apple cider), then drink a cup of olive oil with some lemon juice squirted into it, and lie down on the right side for several hours. The apple pectin is supposed to soften the stones (then why not just use apples for several months?). The olive oil stimulates the gallbladder. The lemon juice makes the olive oil palatable. Many people claim this works, though some say that the "gallstones," under study are just congealed olive oil!

The following account points to a deeper relationship. Here olive oil is used to unkink the pyloric sphincter. When this sphincter opens, to let food out of the stomach, it sends a hormonal signal to the gallbladder to release bile. The fact that olive oil works on the pyloric sphincter indicates that it would simultaneously work on the gallbladder.

W. T. Fernie (1914, 368) writes: "In cases of ulcerated stomach, or contraction of its further outlet (the pylorus), a wineglassful of olive oil taken before meals will prevent the severe pain which otherwise follows on eating; and with most patients the accompanying dilation of the stomach disappears completely. From eight to nine ounces should be thus taken in all every day. In two instances this plan of treatment, when tried as an absolutely last resource before operation, yet proved successful; and the patients, who had become reduced to a shadow, began forthwith to regain flesh, insomuch that within two months they were almost cured."

The leaf has also been used and, in the last decade, has been reintroduced into modern usage. Properties are somewhat different from the oil, since the latter is nutritive and lubricating whereas the

leaf is highly astringent. It has remarkable properties as an antiviral, antibiotic, antifungal, and antiparasitic. It can kill or inhibit more than one hundred pathogenic microorganisms (HIV, anthrax, tinea, chicken pox, chlamydia, cholera, common cold, diphtheria, Epstein-Barr, equine encephalitis, influenza, helicobacter pylori, herpes, giardia, Lyme disease, malaria, rubella, viral meningitis, mumps, pneumonia, rabies, salmonella, staph, strep, thrush, candida, warts, and others). It was used for malaria with some success. It also has a strong effect on the cardiovascular system. Unfortunately, differential symptoms for olive leaf have not been developed, so it is not well established which kind of mumps, pneumonia, herpes, ulcer, and so forth, it will act upon. Dr. Bach used olive bud for exhaustion.

TASTE:

(oil) oily
(leaf) bitter • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

(oil) constriction, atrophy
(leaf) relaxation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

(oil)

INTERNAL

- “Strengthens the gums and tightens the teeth” (Ottway).
- Spasm of the pyloric sphincter (drink olive oil).
- Hepatic insufficiency (oil slows digestion so the liver is not swamped).

- Gallstones, gallstone colic (preventative; 1 teaspoonful in the morning).
- Constipation, habitual (mild laxative; 1–3 teaspoonfuls/day).
- Colitis.

EXTERNAL

- Renal colic.
- Bedwetting of children (friction with olive oil over the kidneys).
- Joints, tendons, muscles (externally, nutritive, lubricating; cf. linseed oil).
- Uterine colic during parturition (1 teaspoonful in a cup of hot milk).
- Swelling of knee after injury (rub oil in clockwise direction, twice a day).
- Swelling of the abdomen, legs, feet (external, friction).
- Burns, insect bites (oil).
- Boils (staph infections) in young athletes, due to inordinate stimulation of the sweat glands.

(leaf)

- Hypertension, vasoconstriction.
- Angina pectoris.
- Diabetes.
- Diarrhea.
- Fever.
- Wounds, sores, ulcers, with putrefaction and discharge.
- Herpes, shingles.

(root)

- Diabetes (shaved olive roots, olive leaves, 1 teaspoonful daily in tea).

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Neither oil nor leaf is known to have toxic effects in short- or long-term use.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Jean Palaiseul (3–10, 13, 15–20), John Eberle (5), Chalid Ottway (1, 5), W. T. Fernie (2, 14), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (22).

Ononis spinosa. Restharrow.

This is a common weed in Europe and has a good reputation in European folk medicine, but is little known in North America. It contains flavonoids, isoflavones, tannins, triterpenes, sterols, and volatile oils.

Restharrow is a very powerful diuretic, increasing urinary output up to 20%. It removes calcified deposits, like a number of diuretics. Thus it is useful in stones and arthritis. Because it contains flavonoids it will be cooling to the genitourinary tract.

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Aphthous ulcers (canker sores).
- *Cystitis*.
- *Urinary calculi*.
- Arthritis, gout.
- Hemorrhoids (external).
- Ulcers and wounds (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

“The root is to be taken up fresh for use, and the bark separated for that purpose. It is to be boiled in water, and the decoction given in

large quantities” (Hill, 1740, 317).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Christopher Menzies-Trull.

Origanum majorana. Sweet Marjoram.

This sweet, perfumy mint has a long history of medical usage in the Old World. It is suited to high-strung persons who push themselves, are exhausted, but cannot relax; to obsessive thinking, particularly about romantic matters; and to irritative conditions of the respiratory tract and digestion (Boericke). Sweet marjoram improves the downward movement of the digestive tract and prevents putrefaction (Elliot and de Paoli). It was at one time used in sneezing powders (Grieve).

TASTE:

sweet, spicy • warm

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- High-strung persons who push themselves, are very tired, but cannot relax.
- Mental tiredness and tension.
- Unrequited love, romantic infatuation, obsessive thinking on the subject; relieved by jogging.
- Headaches associated with nervousness, exhaustion, respiratory and digestive problems.
- Upper respiratory tract disorders accompanied by much sneezing (Chomel).
- Irritable cough.
- Wheezing, oppression, mucus (Matthioli).
- Digestive spasm, belching, stomach cramps, colitis.
- Amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea.
- Sprains, bruises, strains (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion of the bruised fresh or dried leaves, a pinch to a cup, steep.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (1, 2, 4–8), William Boericke (3).

Origanum vulgare. Wild Oregano, Wild Marjoram.

Wild oregano is an Old World mint, easily naturalized in North America. It is analogous in taste to its American cousin *Monarda*

fistulosa, and probably also in properties. It is likewise used in fever, candida, and tinnitus. Wild marjoram contains flavonoids, triterpenoids, vitamins A and C, and volatile oils.

TASTE:

pungent • warm • diffusive

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Tinnitus.
- Colds and flus with chills and shivering.
- Respiratory tract infections with profuse mucus and chilliness.
- Halitosis; putrid digestion, abdominal swelling, hiccough, belching.
- Dyspepsia, gastritis, spasm, colic.
- Candida.
- At the commencement of measles, used to bring out perspiration and the rash, to lessen the course of the disease.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion of the bruised fresh or dried leaves, a pinch to a cup, steep 5 minutes.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–4, 6), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (2–4), Maude Grieve (6).

Osmunda regalis. Royal Fern, Buck Horn Brake, Backache Brake.

This beautiful, regal fern is almost unused in modern herbalism, but after many years of experience with most of the plants in this book I will testify that it is highly useful, at least for one thing: lumbago. Osmunda is mentioned by John Gerard (1633), Nicholas Culpeper (1653), John Quincy (1736), Beal P. Downing (1851), Finley Ellingwood (1918), and Maude Grieve (1931). It is sometimes known as tussock, or boar tusk root.

Osmunda has an earthen, mucilaginous, and astringent taste. Culpeper called it an herb of Saturn because it is drying and hardening. As an astringent it checks excess fluid losses, as an astringent with earthen salts it hardens the bones and reinforces the mineral content of the tissues, while the mucilage soothes, nourishes, and softens the mucosa. Grieve (1931) remarks that “the actual curative virtues of this fern have been said to be due to the

salts of lime, potash and other earths which it derives in solution from the bog soil and from the water in which it grows."

Osmunda is an old remedy for the defective bone growth of infancy and the spinal deterioration of old age. "It passes with some almost for a specific in rickets," writes John Quincy (1736, 103). Beal Downing (1851), writing from the wild American frontier a hundred years later, calls it the "only and absolute cure for rickets." Finley Ellingwood (1918) recommends it for osteoporosis and subluxations of the spine. Maude Grieve (1931) mentions that it has a common name, "lumbago brake." I have found it excellent for lumbago.

As a mucilaginous emollient and astringent *Osmunda* is beneficial for the skin and mucosa. "Its soothing influence upon mucous surfaces seems to be remarkable," writes Ellingwood (1918). "It is most in esteem for restraining the whites in women, and strengthening the womb," continues Quincy. His contemporary, Sir John Hill (1740, 173), writes, "A decoction of the fresh roots promotes urine, and opens obstructions of the liver and spleen; it is not much used, but I have known a jaundice cured by it, taken in the beginning." The mucilage makes it of some value in acute and chronic bronchial irritation.

TASTE:

earthen • cool • mucilaginous, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

relaxation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Persons suffering from bone disease, bone malnutrition, rickets, weakness, tendencies to fluid losses (diarrhea, leucorrhea,

frequent urination), demineralization.
- Rickets, “the best and only absolute cure.”
- *Lumbago, weak back, weakness of the muscular structure of the back, incipient disease of the spinal vertebrae, osteoporosis, subluxations*.
- Large-boned persons.

RESPIRATION

- Chronic irritation of respiratory mucosa.

DIGESTION

- Diarrhea and dysentery; from local irritation; with acute or protracted fevers, with great weakness, in convalescence after such fevers; in poorly nourished patients.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Frequent urination.

SEXUAL

- Decreased sexual desire.
- Female weakness, severe leucorrhea, menopausal problems.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Sprains, bruises, clotted blood, broken bones, bones out of joint.
- Hernia.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The heart or middle part of the root is the traditional source of the medicine. These are gathered in the latter part of summer. Prepared in a fresh infusion they yield a mucilaginous substance that quickly forms into a jelly-like consistency. This is preserved in brandy (Downing, Ellingwood). However, a more ecological preparation is just as good: soak the leaves in water in the sunlight for about 3

hours to extract the minerals. After 3 hours mucilage increasingly dominates the extract (Wood). Samuel Henry (1814, 28) credits “polypody” with the same properties and calls it “backache brake.” It is indicated in “violent coughs,” has “cured the most inveterate lumbago,” and is “an effectual cure for the rickets in children.” I suspect he has misidentified polypody with osmunda.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

None known for internal use. Except in a few locations, osmunda is usually found in sparse populations and should be judiciously collected from the wild. However, I have seen areas where it grew unmolested for miles and miles along northern rivers.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1, 9), John Gerard (9), Nicholas Culpeper (6, 9), Beal P. Downing (1, 2, 7, 11), Finley Ellingwood (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9), Maude Grieve (3), Matthew Wood (1, 3-confirmed), Ariel Rose (4, 8).

Paeonia officinalis, P. albiflora, P. lactiflora. White Peony Root.

Peony (P. officinalis) *was one of the mainstays of Greek medicine and remained popular in European medicine all the way to the nineteenth century. It is less popular today but its Chinese cousin* (P. albiflora) *has been introduced into the West and is now extensively used. There is very little difference between the two. The double flowered red specimens are considered officinal in Western phytotherapy. The flowers and roots have both been used. Peony root contains flavonoids, anthocyanins, and tannins. We should not suppose that the native North American or California peony* (P. californica, P. brownii) *has identical properties to the others* (Michael Moore, 2003).

Peony is one of the three members of the buttercup family that have a powerful action on the female hormonal system. Interestingly, each has a different effect. Pulsatilla acts strongly on hypothalamic-pituitary regulation, cimicifuga on estrogen deficiency, and peony on estrogen excess. For herbal gynecology and obstetrics these three members of the buttercup family are indispensable. I call them the "three sisters." Yet, all of them have considerable other powers outside this sphere.

Peony root is indicated when there is cramping and heavy bleeding. This is usually associated with an estrogen excess profile. It pacifies heat and is specifically indicated by the appearance of acneform sores on the chin, themselves usually a sign of inflammation in the ovaries and estrogen excess or intolerance to estrogen. It was used in Greek medicine in obstetrics to relax the expectant mother, reduce cramping, and encourage labor. After the birth it was used to stop fits and seizures in children.

Galen mentions the ancient custom of tying a peony root around the neck of a child to prevent epileptic seizures. Although a rationalist, highly skeptical in such matters, Galen tested this method on an epileptic boy and found it curative. Several of my students have verified this usage with children, adults, and even dogs. William Salmon (1710) notes that the decoction or extract works just as well as hanging the root around the neck. John Quincy

(1736, 79) notes that “women highly esteem necklaces made of it to hang about children’s necks, for convulsions, and difficult breeding of the teeth.” Today, small children would not be given necklaces.

In traditional Chinese herbalism white peony root is classified as bitter, sour, and slightly cooling. It is indicated in irregular periods, heavy bleeding, and menstrual cramping. It is also used in night sweats; when there is “deficient blood,” yang floats to the surface and causes heat and sweating. For this reason it is also used in fever with spontaneous sweating. It is suited to liver stagnation or stagnant *qi* symptoms with hypochondriac pain, breast distention, and irregular menses. It is also used for muscle spasms and pain of hands and feet, abdominal pain and tenesmus or straining in dysentery. Headaches and dizziness caused by “overactivity of liver yang” come under its purview. It is contraindicated when there is cold or deficiency of yang.

Peony is an excellent remedy in middle-aged, menopausal women who fit the estrogen excess profile: plump, red, flushed, warm. It is believed to help the liver break the “bad estrogens” down into the “good” ones. It is also indicated in young women who are oversensitive to estrogen and the heat it produces (*estrus* is Greek for heat).

William Coles, in *Adam in Eden* (1657), notes that peony buds look like a head, complete with sutures, and that it is a brain or head remedy. He then associates this with epilepsy. I would add another association. Because peony is a cousin of black cohosh, so useful in whiplash and spinal injury, I thought it would be beneficial in brain injuries; sure enough, in the two cases so far, it has proven helpful, restoring one woman to nearly normal after being quite debilitated.

TASTE:

(root) bitter, sour • moist, cool

TISSUE STATES:

(root) irritation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Women; middle-aged, estrogen excess, plump, red-faced, with menopausal flushing.*
- *Women; young, often red-haired, aggravated by estrogen; acneform sores on the chin; worse at ovulation and before the period.*

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nightmares.

HEAD

- Head injuries (cf. *Acorus calamus*).
- Headache, dizziness; aggravated before the period.
- Blurred vision, eyelid twitching, eye irritated.
- *Acneform sores on the chin, worse before the period; facial redness.*

RESPIRATION

- Whooping cough in children, with seizures.

DIGESTION

- Abdominal pain and spasm, in dysentery.
- Hemorrhoids (external).

FEMALE

- *Menstruation:* fullness, heat, redness, discomfort before the period.
- Irregular periods with cramping and heavy bleeding.
- *Menopause:* fullness, heat, redness, hot flashes; helps the liver break down the “bad estrogens” into “good” ones.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *An ancient specific for epilepsy and seizure that has been verified*. The fresh root is tied to a string and hung around the neck; it is beneficial for about a month, or until the root dries up completely.
- Seizures; in children during teething.
- Spasms in the hands and feet.

FEVER

- Fevers with heat and fluid loss, cramping, seizures, easy sweating (cf. *Verbena hastata*).
- Night sweats and heat.

OTHER

- Diabetes mellitus.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Pick the tubers growing beneath the “eyes” and replant the latter to perpetuate the plant. The domestic peony can be used. The fresh root hung around the neck is the best method of use for seizures, since the body is exposed to a constant, small dosage through the vapor rising from the drying root. When the root dries out, use another. Tea or tincture in small to moderate doses.

LITERATURE:

Traditional Greek and Chinese (3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18), Galen (14), homeopathic provings (3, 8), Kim Dudley (19), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13), Christopher Menzies-Trull (6), Isla Burgess, Samuel Henry.

Panax ginseng. Red Ginseng.

Chinese or Korean ginseng is warming and moistening, whereas American ginseng is cooling and moistening. It is the great legendary plant of Eastern herbal medicine, a status that is justified by its extraordinary range of medicinal constituents and wide applicability. It is a member of the Araliaceae family, other members of which include American ginseng, Siberian ginseng, Tienchi ginseng, spikenard, and wild sarsaparilla. Most of these remedies have subtle endocrine activity, but all in different directions. Panax ginseng *contains a rich assortment of sterols, triterpene saponins, volatile oil, polysaccharides, mucilage, vitamins B_1, B_2, and B_{12}, and pantothenic acid*.

Ginseng has been classified as a general "yang tonic," meaning that it restores the latent heat and energy of the organism. An excessive dose in a hot person, or on a hot day, can cause hyperactivity and overheating. However, where there is a lack of heat and energy, ginseng is indicated. For this reason it is especially used for older men, whose energy is not what it once was. It is most specific in neurasthenia or nerve debility, where prolonged anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, heart palpitations, nervous stomach, addictive behaviors, sexual exhaustion, and depression have contributed to a condition of exhaustion, debility, and weakness, perhaps with weight loss. Such conditions wear out the cortisol reserve, which is required to provide enough blood sugar to support all this activity. Hence it is useful in hypoglycemia (cortisol opens the receptor sites for glucagon), which frequently afflicts those suffering from nervous exhaustion. When there is too much reliance on insulin due to the lack of glucagon (which provides blood sugar between meals), we end up with triglyceride formation, high LDL cholesterol, hypertension, weight gain, and diabetes type II.

TASTE:

sweet, warm

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Anxiety, insomnia, tension, depression, addictions, nervous exhaustion, neurasthenia (cf. *Avena sativa*).
- Memory loss.

RESPIRATION

- Colds, infections.
- Asthma, tuberculosis.

HEART

- Heart palpitations.
- High cholesterol and triglycerides; high blood pressure.
- Heart failure.

DIGESTION

- Stomach tension and fullness, with inability to digest food.
- Peptic ulcers.

MALE

- Low sperm count.
- Low sexual desire.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Enuresis.
- Renal failure; edema.

OTHER

- Alcoholism.
- Diabetes mellitus type II.

- Hypoglycemia.
- Convulsions.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

There are many different preparations of red ginseng. Consult a text specializing in this plant.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Not indicated for hot, active persons, or in hot weather.

LITERATURE:

Traditional.

Petroselinum sativum. Parsley.

The name Petroselinum *comes from the Greek, meaning "celery of the rocks." The growth habit amid the rocks is a signature in traditional herbalism for a kidney or stone-breaking remedy. Parsley is one of the five "opening roots" of traditional Greek/Arabic medicine, used to remove obstructions to the movement of blood, lymph, sweat, urine, stool, and menstrual blood, along with celery, fennel, butcher's broom, and asparagus. All of these are salty plants. All but the last two are in the Apiaceae or carrot family. Parsley contains flavonoids, fixed oils, mucilage, vitamins A and C, coumarins, minerals (iron, calcium, sodium, trace elements), and volatile oils (including apiol, also in celery).*

Parsley leaves have a slightly bitter, crispy, and salty taste that indicates the presence of minerals and sodium that increase secretion. Sodium draws water into areas that are dehydrated and mineralized, breaking up hardness. The buildup of sodium in the

internal waters of the body (up to a point) strengthens diuresis and drives out stagnant waters through rejuvenated kidneys. Too much sodium collects excessive water. As a normalizer, parsley thins congealed fluids and breaks stones. The mild bitterness increases digestion in the stomach and raises the internal heat. Hence, parsley is warming, nourishing, thinning, and opening. It contains fixed and volatile oils and has an effect on oil systems and the steroid hormones made from lipids.

William Salmon (1710, 812) writes that parsley "is peculiar against the cholick in the stomach and bowels, expells wind, opens obstructions of the liver, spleen, reins and womb, gives ease in the strangury, provokes urine, is said to break and expel the stone, gravel, sand and tartarous slime; is profitable against the jaundice, dropsy, and falling sickness, provokes the terms in women, facilitates the birth, and resists and expels poison."

Parsley is the herb "par excellence" for the kidneys and bladder, writes Culpeper (1653). It has been found to be almost infallible as a general remedy for bladder infections. I knew an elderly gentleman who claimed to have "cured" (his word) more than eighty seniors with an infusion of the fresh leaves of parsley. His method: buy a bunch of parsley in the grocery store, cut it in half, chop one-half fine and infuse in 3 cups, to be taken 3 cups a day for two to three weeks. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, considered drop doses of parsley tincture to be specific for gonorrhea with discharges of slime or mucus in the urine.

"In addition to being a kidney cleanser, parsley supplies properties that maintain the proper function of the thyroid and adrenals," writes Dr. J. V. Cerney (1976, 120). "It maintains the well-being of the smaller blood vessels (venules, arterioles, capillaries). Of particular note is its effectiveness in the treatment of weak eyes and other diseases of the eyes." He also recommends it for menstrual irregularity. This usage was introduced by French doctors in 1849. Contemporary herbalist Billie Potts considers parsley to be one of the most important but *overlooked female medicines*. Dr. William T. Fernie (1914, 376) says it is "beneficial for women who are irregular as to their monthly courses due to ovarian

debility." Dr. Elliot Abravanel (1982, 14) recommends parsley leaf tea as a general tonic for the adrenals.

Stewed in lard, parsley root "makes one of the best-known ointments for erysipelas, inflammation, etc." (Slack, 1919, 115).

TASTE:

(seed) slightly bitter and salty • aromatic, oily, mucilaginous

TISSUE STATES:

depression, torpor, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- Weak, anemic persons.

HEAD

- Dizziness.
- Eyes, hot and swollen; blepharitis (inflammation of the margins of the lids); conjunctivitis, with discharge (external).

RESPIRATION

- Allergies, hay fever, mucus, colds, coughs, asthma.

GLANDS

- Scrofula, swollen glands.
- Mastitis; breasts hard and swollen, with retention of milk (external).

DIGESTION, LIVER, GALLBLADDER

- Lack of appetite, bad breath, poor digestion.
- Gastrointestinal pain, spasm, cramp, flatulence, gastritis.

- Liver and gallbladder “problems”; jaundice, gallstones.
- Colic in children.
- Constipation.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Dropsy, scanty urination; especially following scarlatina and other eruptive diseases.
- Retention of urine, nephritis, and cystitis, especially when the urine is thick, irritating, and painful.
- Glutinous slime in the urine, as in gonorrheal discharge.
- Cystitis; urethritis when the urine causes a scalding sensation.

FEMALE

- Weak, anemic women with scanty periods.
- Very severe cases of dysmenorrhea (tincture of the seed in vinegar).
- Menstrual irregularity.

OTHER

- Colliquative sweating of tuberculosis; profuse perspiration during severe fever (seed).
- Arthritis, gout.
- Low blood pressure.

EXTERNAL

- Acne, eczema, erysipelas, inflammation.
- Contusions.
- Insect stings.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

“Leaves, roots, and seed are all used: the leaves are weakest, the roots are next in strength, and then the seed” (Salmon). The root and leaf are commonly made into tea. The oils are extracted or

distilled from the seed to produce “apiol.” William Salmon differentiates between the properties of the alcoholic, vinegar, and oily preparations of the seed.

CAUTIONS:

Like many members of the carrot family parsley stimulates uterine contractions (though not very strongly) and its use is therefore limited in pregnancy. The seeds have been used as an abortifacient. The distilled oleoresin of the seed can cause dizziness, fainting, and paralysis, followed by fatty degeneration of the liver and kidneys (Grieve, 1931).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–24), William Salmon (6, 17), Samuel Hahnemann (14), John William Fyfe (17), Maude Grieve, Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (16), Billie Potts, William T. Fernie (18), George Slack (22), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (8, 15).

Pimpinella anisum. Anise Seed.

Anise seed has long been employed in European folk and professional medicine. It is a member of the Apiaceae family, usually compared with its cousins dill, fennel, and caraway, all of which are used as carminatives in European cookery and medicine. Anise seed needs to be differentiated from star anise (Illicium spp.), *which has a similar taste but is more active and comes from a completely different botanical family. Anise seed contains flavonoids (including quercetin), rutin, sugars, malic acid, iron, sodium, and volatile oils (including anethole)*.

Anise seed has a sweet, fragrant, mildly warm/spicy flavor. It is moistening, nourishing, emollient (softening), warming, anodyne

(pain-relieving), and moderately antiseptic. Like other members of the apiaceae it calms and builds the nervous system, acting especially on the digestive and respiratory spheres through both the nerves and mucosa. It is the most sweet, moistening, and nourishing of the apiaceae carminatives, and is indicated in conditions where the digestive tract is dry, atrophic, or spasmodic.

The most important use of anise is as a carminative for spasm and bloating in the stomach and intestines. An ancient name for anise was *solamen intestinorum* (comforter of the bowels). Today it is classified as a parasympathetic relaxant. That says much the same thing, since the parasympathetic largely runs the stomach and intestines. Anise is an important traditional remedy for wind, bloating, spasm, sluggish digestion, and lack of appetite.

Anise is also highly valued for breaking up catarrh or heavy phlegm from the digestive and respiratory tracts (Harris, 1972). “It has a special influence on the bronchial tubes to encourage expectoration, particularly in children,” writes W. T. Fernie (1914, 26). “For infantile catarrh, after its first feverish stage, aniseed tea is very useful.” He quotes several adults who found relief from asthma with the essence of anise seed (“anisette”) in water. He used it for “bronchitis, with attacks of spasmodic asthma,” with “barking like Cerberus,” and sleeplessness. One patient reported, “I have been bronchitic and asthmatic for twenty years, and have never known an alleviative so immediately efficacious as ‘anisette.’ ”

In addition to preventing bloating and gas, Rycharde Banckes (1525) informs us that the principal uses of anise in his day were to unbind stoppage of the liver and blocked humors. Probably because of its high oil content it acts on the liver and gallbladder. Phyllis Light uses anise seed to decongest the gallbladder when there is phlegm occluding the bile passages and gallstones are released mixed with a lot of phlegm.

Anise has a mild anodyne property, which makes it pain-relieving in harsh, painful coughs, gastrointestinal colic, and menstrual pain. The oil of the seed can produce stupefaction, tremors, and seizures, so it evidently causes in concentrated doses what it cures in small doses. It also promotes prolactin and lactation but seems to reduce

estrogen. As a parasympathetic relaxant we should associate it with the *kapha* or parasympathetic-dominant constitution suffering from stress, exhaustion, and lethargy. Herbalist Laurel Dewey (1999, 76) paints a beautiful picture of the character of the plant, matching this kind of personality. Anise seed takes a long time to come to maturity, she observes. It requires a growing season of at least 130 days. Thus, it may be associated with a steady, slow, purposeful character. She also detects a susceptibility to perfectionism, which may explain the nervousness that sometimes afflicts what sounds like an otherwise overly relaxed constitution.

TASTE:

sweet, pungent • warm, moist

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervousness, insomnia; associated with digestive problems; "the restlessness of languid digestion" (freshly ground anise seed in hot milk for insomnia).

HEAD

- Migraine accompanied by nausea.

RESPIRATION

- *Infantile catarrh; coughing and mucus in children; after the fever has subsided.*
- Tickle in the back of the throat.
- *Colds, respiratory infections;* whooping cough, tracheitis, pneumonia, asthma.

- *Hard, dry, painful, spasmodic coughs with phlegm difficult to raise, dried out.*
- Bronchitis, with attacks of spasmodic asthma; “barking like Cerberus.”
- Emphysema.
- Aerophagia, hiccough.

DIGESTION

- *Bad breath; poor appetite; fermentation of food in the stomach and bowels; with colic*.
- *Indigestion with weakness, nervousness, flatulence, tension, hiccough, belching, nausea, vomiting, abdominal spasm, griping, colic, pain.*
- Gallstones; stones mixed with mucus.
- Colic in infants and young children; safe for young babies (do not confuse with star anise, *Illicium* spp.).
- Cholera.

KIDNEYS

- Scanty urination.

FEMALE

- Menstrual cramping associated with high estrogen levels.
- Vaginal discharge; “white humors from the uterus” (Al Tamimi).
- Low libido (women and men).
- Lactation: increases milk production and prevents colic in the baby.

SKIN

- Pediculosis and scabies (external).
- Increases perspiration.

OTHER

- Epilepsy, convulsions; in infants and children.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion: the seeds must be freshly ground as they quickly lose their properties. Simmer 4 ounces in a closely covered pint of water for 2–3 minutes, steep for 10 minutes, strain, and sip slowly (Dewey). Once a day for three weeks, rest for ten days, repeat the course for three weeks, with rest, and again. If used more frequently, anise can oversedate and slow the metabolism (Elliot and de Paoli). Tincture of the whole seed: 9–12 drops a day is in the "normal range"; for pain and spasm take a lower dose, 1–2 drops, 6x/day (Kenner and Requena, 2001, 203). Topical salve: 5 drops of anise seed oil in 1 tablespoon of base oil, rub on spasmodic abdomen (Dewey).

CAUTIONS:

The seed (or fruit) is considered fairly safe, but should not be used during pregnancy. The oil can irritate the skin (Dewey). Taken internally, the oil can be toxic, irritating the stomach, kidneys, and nervous system, resulting in stupefaction, tremor, renal damage, epileptiform seizures, and miscarriage (Fernie). Do not confuse with star anise (*Illicium* spp.), which has had toxic effects in children.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, W. T. Fernie (1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11), Jack Ritchason (8), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (9, 11, 15, 18), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (10), Laurel Dewey (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 16, 18-confirmed, 19), Phyllis Light (12), Al Tamimi (17), Christopher Menzies-Trull (15, 17–20, 22), Rudolf Steiner (21).

Plantago majus, P. lanceolata. Plantain.

This little plant is as useful as it is common. Plantain grows in soil that has been heavily compacted by foot or other traffic. The name comes

from the Latin planta, *a foot, in reference to its appearance and habitat. It is native to Europe but widely naturalized and known in many places as "whiteman's footprint." In China* Plantago asiatica *is known as "plant before cart" (Lu, 1994, 153). Although science falls short of an explanation, it is clear from watching where plantain grows and what it survives that it possesses extra power to draw water and nutrients out of compacted ground. This is a signature, indicating that it can "draw" foreign substances out of the body. In fact, plantain is one of the best "drawing agents" in Western herbalism. It contains flavonoids and acids (including vitamin C), allantoin, mucilage, sugars, fixed oils, tannins, bitters, and minerals (potassium and calcium)*.

Plantain is cooling, moistening, softening (emollient), and astringent. It was classified as drying in Greek medicine because it is able to draw out and close up pus and infection and stop outflows of water and blood. However, it is also soothing to irritated membranes and it is one of the best drawing agents we possess. It is excellent for a dirty wound, to draw out the dirt and infection and leave it in a clean state, and for boils and abscesses.

Another name for plantain is "snakeweed," due to the fact that the little seed stalk sometimes resembles a snake's head, and also because it is used as a drawing agent to draw out venom from a snake bite. Here we turn to an old physician. Dr. Henry Taylor (1860, 274) writes that treatment of a rattlesnake or cottonmouth bite should be prompt. If a surgeon is present, the flesh around the bite should be cut away or burned. "But best of all is the application of plantain." Bathe the wound with a strong decoction. "After this, mix the decoction of the plantain with the slippery elm bark and a good quantity of sweet oil; apply this constantly as long as there is any swelling or inflammation." Take olive oil to keep the gastrointestinal tract moving. The late Anishinabe herbalist Keewaydinoquay pointed out that plantain had a special affinity for venom of all kinds. It is an important remedy for the bites of snakes, bees, mosquitoes, and poisonous spiders.

As a drawing agent I find plantain particularly useful when there are abscesses around the teeth, inflamed roots of teeth, or old lingering infections after root canal surgery. It is a specific here and it will almost never fail to draw out the pus and stop the infection, sometimes even saving the tooth where it was thought to be lost. I have seen this in dozens of cases and considered it a personal discovery, but I note a comment by Yadubir Sinha (1962, 118): “In pains of any kind in teeth and gums, apply this remedy 4 times a day with cotton and see the miracle.”

Plantain can be quite helpful in bronchial infections and pneumonia. It cools and moistens the mucosa, but also astringes and draws up, so to speak, mucus and water from the lungs. It is indicated when there is irritation in the trachea and bronchi, with an irritable cough. It also strengthens the kidneys—it is a “nourishing diuretic” rather than a “forceful diuretic,” as William LeSassier would express it, meaning that it increases renal output by building up the kidneys rather than forcing them to work and weakening them. In China the seeds of *Plantago asiatica* are used as a kidney tonic (seeds are considered to have a greater affinity to the kidneys in Chinese herbalism). It is used for edema, water in the lungs, inflammation of the kidneys, gonorrhea, and associated low back pain. This is fairly analogous to the Western usage.

The seeds of another relative, *Plantago psyllium*, are used to provide fiber (the husks) or mucilage (the seeds) in contemporary Western medicine. The roughage stimulates the bowel (irritates it in sensitive people), whereas the mucilage coats and soothes. The fiber is believed to get into the circulation and improve conditions of the vasculature. *Plantago majus* herb has somewhat analogous properties. It cools and moistens the bowels. The leaves of *Plantago asiatica* are used for bacterial enteritis, diarrhea, and hemorrhoids. The nutritive qualities of plantain are utilized in the East for wasting and retarded development of infants due to deficiency of growth hormone and androgen. In the East it is also used for cooling and reducing dampness.

Plantain was one of the most important coolants used in European Renaissance herbalism. It was especially used when heat was

associated with scurvy. It contains vitamin C. “It cures the Scurvy in a hot habit of body, heals the excoriations of the stomach and other bowels, stops catarrhs, and all sorts of fluxes in man or woman. It stops also all sorts of hemorrhages whether internal or external, the overflowing of the courses in women, spitting and pissing of blood, and therefore is of excellent use in the curing of a phthisis [tuberculosis], or ulceration of the lungs” (Salmon, 1710, 873). Culpeper says it is specific for a “hot womb.”

Plantain is considered to be either a snake medicine or a frog medicine in American Indian practice. One of my students observed a frog eat the leaf after being bitten by a spider. The same observation comes from India, though here the victim was a toad (Rogers, 2000, 16). It is a Native American remedy for Bell’s palsy. The signature for the nerves is in the fibers that run through the leaves.

TASTE:

bitter, earthen • cool, moist and dry • fibrous, mucilaginous, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, atrophy, relaxation, depression (especially putrefaction)

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

EYES

- Inflammation of the eyes; conjunctivitis; blepharitis; bloodshot eyes; dry, red eyes (warm poultice on the unopened eye, followed by eyewashes of the infusion).
- Poor vision, light sensitivity, cataract.
- Sore eyes from tearing, sore nostrils from blowing the nose (external).

EARS

- Earache; facial neuralgia.
- Catarrhal deafness (combined with nettle juice).

TEETH, GUMS, AND MOUTH

- *Abscessed teeth; infected root canal, before or after surgery (mouthwash)*.
- Thrush in children.

RESPIRATION

- Sore throat; chronic tracheitis.
- Upper respiratory and chest infections; colds, bronchitis, pneumonia.
- Bronchitis; dry cough, sounds as if the person were trying to cough out a fiber caught in the throat or chest.
- Pneumonia; pulls water and mucus up from deep in the lungs in old, infected cases.
- Fibrosities in the lungs; fibrosing alveolitis, emphysema, tuberculosis.
- A specific for smoking cessation; can make cigarettes not taste good and cleanses the lungs after smoking.

DIGESTION

- *Diseases of the gastrointestinal mucous surfaces, when there are pinching or colicky pains*.
- Stomachache, diarrhea, hemorrhoids (infusion in milk).
- Constipation (seeds soaked overnight, similar to psyllium seed).
- Colitis, diarrhea, dysentery.
- Constipation, hemorrhoids.

LIVER

- Hepatitis, jaundice.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- “Affections of the kidneys, Bright’s disease, ulceration and inflammation of the kidneys.”
- Edema.
- Bladder infections, urinary difficulty.
- Incontinence in children and the aged.

FEMALE

- Vaginitis, vaginal discharge (internal, or douche).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Lower back pain.
- Sprains and strains (external).
- Neuralgia.

SKIN

- *Inflammatory affections of the skin, when there is pricking, itching, or burning pain*.
- *Dirty wounds, open sores, boils, abscesses*, burns, skin irritations, sunburn, poison ivy (external).
- Acne, impetigo, eczema.

OTHER

- Reduces cholesterol.
- Hemorrhage; external or internal, especially from ulcerations.
- *Insect bites, snake bites* (external).
- Bell’s palsy (one-sided paralysis).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

“The whole plant can be used (roots, stems, leaves, and seeds), either in syrup, infusion, decoction, or fluid or solid extract. It can be ground up and made into pills” (Hool). In acute situations pull up the plantain leaves, chew, and place on the part. Juice the leaves for use fresh during the summer; dry for use in the winter. Dose: 1 cup,

1–3x/day. Extract fresh in alcohol; dose: 1–10 drops internally, 1–3x/day. Salve, cream, or poultice.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Plantago asiatica is contraindicated in men with seminal emissions due to kidney deficiency (Lu).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–11, 13–20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33), modern research (12, 31), homeopathic literature (4, 13), Matthew Wood (6, 10, 11), Yadubir Sinha (6), Richard Hool (7, 22), Jack Ritchason, Robert Dale Rogers (1, 5, 12, 15) Tommie Bass (24, 31, 32), Rolla Thomas (14, 28), Henry Lu (*Plantago asiatica*—1, 8, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24).

Polygonum aviculare. Knotweed.

The Polygonums *are a subdivision of the rhubarb family (Polygonaceae). There is considerable variation among them.* P. aviculare *is mucilaginous and cooling,* P. bistorta *is warming and intensely astringent,* P. hydropiper *is warming and stimulating,* P. persicaria *is warming and mucilaginous. The constituents of these plants are often intolerant of heat and respond best to cold water infusion overnight.*

Knotweed proper (P. aviculare) *is a common weed native to Europe but widely dispersed throughout the world. It is, perhaps, the most common of the knotweed clan. It contains mucilage (which is easily noticed on scrunching a leaf), flavonoids, sugars, acids, tannins, coumarins, and a little soluble silicon.*

Knotweed “is used almost exclusively in *folk medicine* as an expectorant and secretolytic for coughs and bronchial catarrh, and further as an adjuvant in pulmonary disorders (like other silicic acid-containing drugs), as well as against night sweats in patients with tuberculosis. In folk medicine, the drug is also employed as a diuretic [see below under *P. hydropiper*], a haemostyptic in certain kinds of bleeding, and for skin conditions.

“In pharmacological experiments, knotgrass extracts have been shown to be active ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibiters” (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 387), but hypotensive properties have not been proven in practice. The flavonoid fraction inhibits thrombocyte aggregation. There are no known side effects or cautions and it is counted among the edible wild plants.

Polygonum bistorta, P. bistortoides.
Bistort, Snakeweed.

The name bistort comes from the Latin for “twice bent,” referring to the bent shape of the root, which looks like a snake folded back upon itself, or a blackened intestine. Bistort has been used for a variety of conditions manifesting a low, depressed tissue condition, including snake bite, plague, cholera, typhoid, colitis, bleeding, and hemorrhoids. Maude Grieve (1931, 106) writes, “The older herbalists considered both the leaves and roots to have ‘a powerful faculty to resist poison.’ Combined with the bitter flag root (calamus), the root was used to cure intermittent fever and ague.” They also mention polypi, spongy gums, measles, plague (epidemic disease), smallpox, jaundice. William Salmon (1710) gives a formula for smallpox and eruptive fever: bistort root, angelica, zedoary, cinnamon.

In addition to its stimulating properties, bistort is an astringent. It is one of “the strongest astringent medicines in the vegetable kingdom and highly styptic and may be used to advantage for all bleedings, whether external or internal, and wherever astringency is required. The powder, or decoction, of [the roots], will stop all

fluxes of the belly, and is one of the safest remedies known for overflowings of the menses" (John Hill, 1740, 87). "Although its use has greatly been superseded by other astringents of foreign origin, it is of proved excellence in diarrhea, dysentery, cholera and all bowel complaints and in hemorrhages from the lungs and stomach, and is a most effectual remedy for bleeding from the nose and exceedingly useful in dealing with hemorrhoids. It is used—as a medicine, injection and gargle—in mucous discharges, as well as for hemorrhages" (Maude Grieve, 1931, 106). It removes "canker" or mucoid coating from the intestines (John Christopher, 1976, 178), renewing the tissues as it removes old mucus and allows the secretion of new mucus with its increased immune properties.

TASTE:

pungent • warm • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

depression, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

DIGESTION

- *Putrefaction in the alimentary canal and passive bleeding from the mucosa*.
- *Loose teeth, gum disease, sore, ulcerated mouth (mouthwash)*.
- *Diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, typhoid, colitis; massive fluid loss*.
- Parasites causing bleeding.
- Straining at stool causing bleeding.
- *Hemorrhoids*.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Incontinence.

FEMALE

- Profuse menstrual bleeding.
- Leucorrhea.
- Amenorrhea.
- Dysmenorrhea.

FEVER

- Intermittent fever, eruptive fever; measles, formerly used in the epidemic diseases and smallpox.

WOUNDS

- Bruises, with black tissue.
- Cuts, bleeding.

OTHER

- Diabetes.
- Hernia.
- Insect strings, snake bites.
- Drawing agent (bistort and comfrey powder, worked into a muck); on joint injuries, broken fingers, sprained joints, abscesses (Michael Moore).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The root is dug at the end of winter, “when the leaves begin to shoot,” and dried for use as tea (John Hill, 1740, 87). The tincture is made from the fresh or dried root. Dose: 30–50 drops (Christopher).

CAUTIONS:

“The use of this root may be continued without danger, till it effects a perfect cure” (John Hill, 1740, 87).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1), John Christopher (2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17), Maude Grieve (12), John Skelton (2, 3, 8), Marie Southworth (13), Dorothy Hall (4, 5, 6), Louise Tenney (15), Michael Moore (18).

Polygonum hydropiper, Polygonum spp. Water Pepper, Smartweed, Arsesmart.

There are a number of hot, peppery knotweeds native to the edges of wet spots in Europe and North America. Throughout the world they have earned similar names. The English "water pepper" and the Latin hydropiper *are analogous to the Aztec* A chilli *(water chile). The Aztec herbal of 1552 clearly shows a knotweed under this name, though it is misidentified by the translator (Gates, 2000, 65). This plant was used in a formula for lesions on the foot. A cousin called* mamaxtla *("many-jointed leg") was used as a diuretic "against difficulty in urination" (Gates, 2000, 60). This Aztec name is similar to the Latin* polygonum, *"many joints." The various water peppers are used interchangeably*.

Water pepper grows on the margins of wet spots that dry out in the summer, filling in the bare earth left as the water retreats. Thus, it has the same signature as gravel root and hydrangea, showing the perfect balance of water and solid. In European folk medicine water pepper is the specific for taking away gravel, the way gravel root and hydrangea are used in North America. The hard little black seeds are also signatory of kidney stones. Dr. William Salmon (1710, 45) gives arsesmart extensive treatment under this subject. It is a "specifick," he writes, "known by manifold and huge experience to be a peculiar plant against gravel and stone, whether in reins or bladder." He preferred the distilled water, which "has cured to admiration when all other things in the World has failed, and so great things have been some hundreds of times experimented of this simple *Distilled Water*, which seem to be even Miraculous, it

performing what much reputed Medicaments cannot do: I write not this from my own Experience only, which in this case is very considerable, but we have also the suffrage of very great and learned men, as to the same thing." Dr. John Hill (1740, 64) corroborates, "The right arsesmart is an excellent medicine in obstructions of urine, in the gravel and stone. And in jaundice and beginning dropsies it has done great cures. The juice of the fresh-gathered plant is the best way of giving it."

The second signature of water pepper is that it is "many jointed," or like a "many-jointed leg," per the Aztec nomenclature. Thus, it is used for arthritis. Very often kidney stone remedies have this double function, because it is thought that they regulate the balance of water and solids in the body as well as the kidneys. Thus, they are called "anti-lithics" in the old literature. My friend Paul Red Elk knew of an old, now-deceased medicine man who used smartweed to break up hard arthritic nodularities in the joints.

The "knot signature" has also inspired the use of knotweed as an antidote to magical curses made by tying knots in strings. Thus, William Salmon (1710) notes in passing, "Some use it in the transplantation of diseases, and removing of incantations."

The third major property of water pepper is its stimulating, pepper quality. It is used like many plants of this nature (cf. *Cinnamomum, Erigeron, Achillea, Capsicum*), to stop hemorrhage, diarrhea, and watery discharge. It normalizes conditions of excess or deficiency of flow, especially from the kidneys. Dr. John Christopher (1996, 181) writes, "It produces a sensation of heat in the stomach, increases the force of the heart, raises arterial tension, promotes surface warmth and the secretions of the bronchial, renal, and uterine areas."

The final notable property of water pepper is that it causes burning itching of the rectum, hence the name arsesmart, or more politely, smartweed. This indicates its use in hemorrhoids with burning in the rectum—I have verified this application.

TASTE:

pungent • hot • stimulating

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Colds, coughs.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- “Increases the force of the heart, raises arterial tension.”

DIGESTION

- Sore mouth, spongy gums (cold water infusion of the fresh leaves as a gargle).
- Diarrhea, dysentery, cholera.
- Flatulent colic, pains sharp and lancinating, intermittent, of a severe, griping character.
- Hemorrhoids, rectal itching, “inflamed stage of the piles” (Cobb).

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Specific for kidney stone formation and colic (cf. *Hydrangea, Eupatorium maculatum*).
- Depression of kidney action following the active stage of fevers and inflammations (cf. *Solidago, Petroselinum, Galium*).

FEMALE

- *Suppression of menstruation, chilly sensations in back, tensive pain, pain of legs*.
- Amenorrhea due to atony, exposure to cold.
- Excessive menstrual flux.
- Atonic hemorrhage following abortion or miscarriage.

- Persistent, low volume, atonic bleeding of menopause.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Hard, arthritic nodularities.

SKIN

- *Harsh, inactive, dry skin; suppression of perspiration*.

OTHER

- Diabetes mellitus type II; increases circulation and perhaps cell metabolism.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Fluid extract, 1–15 drops; in hot tea for fever and suppressed menses. *Polygonum pennsylvanicum* can be used as a substitute. Smartweed is an "accelerator" for other herbs, according to the late Tommie Bass (Darryl Patton).

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–10), Daniel Cobb (6, 11, 12), William Salmon (7), John Christopher (1, 2, 3, 4, 7), Rolla Thomas (9, 15), Robert Dale Rogers (3, 12, 13), Paul Red Elk (14, 16).

Polygonum persicaria. Lady's Thumb, Peach-leaved Knotweed.

This is not a widely used member of the knotweed family, but it ought to be better known. It has several interesting qualities. The black mark on the leaf (like a lady's thumbprint) almost demands our attention and indicates a remedy for depressed or even necrotic tissues, while the almost repulsive slime and smell of the tincture are quite unique.

Indications for lady's thumb have been worked out by my friend Lise Wolff. She says that it is indicated when there is a dark spot in the center of the tongue or a dark line down the central crease. This usually corresponds to depression of the digestive powers or stagnant blood involving the spine. The characteristic stomach emotions are present. The person worries, is a worrier, and the stomach is "all tied in knots." Food allergies are common. The membranes are dry and digestion is poor. There may be a history of unresolved mononucleosis (cf. baptisia, helianthemum). Old bug bites remain and have a purple-reddish appearance, indicating stagnant, inflamed conditions of the blood. Vaginal dryness is also possible. It is a remedy for infertility because it eliminates stagnant blood from the uterus and increases secretion. Stagnant blood in the lower spine and pelvis. Cancer when there is a black spot in the middle of the tongue.

A friend of mine had cancer of the colon, removed by surgery. She had a big black spot in the middle of the tongue. I gave her tincture of lady's thumb and the spot disappeared. She did many other things as well. Neither the spot nor the cancer has returned. That was five years ago.

Potentilla anserina. Silverweed.

The potentilla clan has properties similar to those of their cousins in the rose family, the agrimonias and geums. Most of these plants are astringents for relaxed tissues that (ironically) are associated with a tense mental, emotional, or physical background. Dr. Bach taught us about the mental indications for agrimony and I have found that they are largely true for the potentillas as well: tension hidden behind a facade.

Silverweed contains tannins (up to 25%), various flavonoids and related structures, organic acids, resins, gums, and essential oils. Empirical experience in modern phytotherapy suggests that it is spasmolytic, but no pharmacological evidence for this has yet been found (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994). The name "silverweed" refers to the furred

leaf. The short, fine hairs make it silver in appearance and are insulative, carrying the plant into frigid zones. Silverweed is native to Europe but extremely widely naturalized in temperate to subarctic locations, from northern Canada to New Zealand, Argentina, and Lapland.

"Country folk often call it Cramp Weed," writes Dr. W. T. Fernie (1914, 472). "Silverweed tea is excellent to relieve cramps of the belly; and compresses, wrung out of a hot decoction of the herb, may at the same time be helpfully applied over the seat of the cramps." Maria Treben included silverweed among her small but potent group of healing herbs. Robert Dale Rogers, writing in northern Alberta, also speaks of it highly. It is the *Potentilla* of choice for the German E Commission. William Salmon (1710) classified it as cool and dry in the second degree.

TASTE:

(roots) sweet, cool, and astringent

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

COMPLEXION

- Pigmentation mask over cheeks and bridge of nose.

DIGESTION

- Gums; spongy and bleeding; scorbutic; loose teeth.
- Mouth and throat; sores and ulcerations; relaxed uvula (gargle).
- Esophageal and stomach ulcers.
- Nervous stomach.
- *Cramping of the stomach and intestines*.
- Diarrhea and constipation alternating.
- Diarrhea, in children (root, combine with blueberry leaf and Irish moss).
- Dysentery.
- Hemorrhoids, bleeding (external).
- Gallbladder; chronic inflammation; jaundice.

KIDNEYS

- Gravel and stone.

FEMALE

- *Menstruation: dysmenorrhea of spastic origin*.
- Leucorrhea, yeast, or bacterial infection (douche).

FEVER

- Inflammation and fever caused by infection.
- Intermittent fever (leaves).

SKIN

- Acne, freckles, sunburn.
- Shingles (in vinegar or wine).
- Wounds, eczema.
- Ulcers, external.

OTHER

- Metabolic disorder: diabetes, goiter, obesity.
- Lockjaw (tablespoon of the herb boiled in milk or water, drunk as hot as possible).
- Epilepsy.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion of the dried leaves and flowers: pour 1 cup of boiling water over 3 teaspoons, cover, and steep for 10 minutes. Dose: 1–3 cups/day. Decoction of the dried, chopped roots: Simmer 2 tablespoons in 1 pint of water for 20 minutes. Dose: 1–2 ounces, 1–3x/day. Tincture: 2–4 ml, 3x/day (Rogers).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Maria Treben, Robert Dale Rogers (1, 8, 18), Maude Grieve (2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22), Norman Grainger Bisset and Max Wichtl (13), Russian research (21), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (23), W. T. Fernie (1, 6, 10, 17).

Potentilla erecta, P. tormentilla. Tormentil, Septfoil, Cinquefoil.

Tormentil is perhaps the most "fierce" looking of the potentillas. The leaves are deeply serrated so that they look like a tortured hand—though in this potentilla there are usually five main leaves and two small ones, so that it is sometimes called "septfoil" instead of "cinquefoil." It is a northern European plant, naturalized to North America, so it was not named by the Greek and Latin authors, but it has all the properties of the cinquefoils of antiquity (including the magical ones). It is the most tortured looking of the whole family, and therefore bears the signature of stress and pain that runs through the potentillas, agrimonias, and geums. The root is an astringent, with some sugars, and a touch of mucilage.

Tormentil is "a very common wild plant, but very pretty, and of great virtue," writes Sir John Hill (1740, 370). "The root is the part

used, and it is best dried; it may be given in powder or decoction; the powder is excellent against the bleeding of the piles, bloody stools, and the overflowings of the menses.… The root is cordial as well as astringent, and operates a little by sweat. This decoction is therefore very serviceable in fevers, attended with purgings." The leaves are also powerful.

Tormentil has the same psychological properties as agrimony, and can be used in the same way. Even the magical properties are similar: both are excellent for correcting problems having to do with hierarchical organizations (employer/employee problems) or interference in one's work. *This is in fact the single most reliable indication I know in herbalism: tormentil or agrimony has never failed in any instance I am aware of to resolve employment, boundary, or legal tensions*. Place a leaf or spray some tincture on the documents, boundary, or work space involved. It removes "enchantments" designed to interfere with one's work.

Beyond this, tormentil possesses all the medicinal properties listed under agrimony. However, it is more astringent and contains some mucilage, so it is more beneficial in diseases of the guts, for which it has long been used. In a medieval monastery in Scotland, famous for its medical cures, archeologists found the drainpipes full of tormentil mixed with worms. Dr. John Bastyr used tormentilla for all types of diarrhea, 60 drops, 2x/day (William Mitchell, 2003, 70).

One time I was out in the country visiting some friends and one of them had an asthmatic attack. She was tortured to capture her breath, a statement Dr. Bach made about agrimony. I looked out in the yard for some kind of remedy, found some *Potentilla erecta*, and gave it to my friend. It quickly relieved the attack—it did not cure the chronic asthma.

William Salmon (1710, 185) gives a use based on the doctrine of signatures: "If the hands be often washed therewith, and it is suffered every time to dry in of it self, without wiping, it will in a short time help the palsie, or shaking of them."

Cinquefoil "is not much used, which is a pity, for it is very powerful," writes Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 48). "I value this herb very much." She uses it in epilepsy and hysterical nervous

disorders, syringed into the nostrils for sinus infections, externally on sore mouth and gums, as a gargle for inflamed and ulcerated throats, and on wounds “of all kinds.”

Primula veris. Primrose, Cowslip, Heaven’s Keys.

The common primrose “is the most widely known of our English wild flowers,” writes Dr. Fernie (1914, 413), “and appears in the Spring as its earliest herald,” while we in America are reduced to watching it grow in pots in the early spring. The name primula comes from the Latin primus*, first. It is native to low ground in northern Europe, where it has a reputation as a medicine. It is little used in North America. Primula contains flavonoids in the flowers, saponins in the rhizomes, and is astringent throughout.*

Primula is a nervine, “being extremely calming to the nervous system” (Juliette de Bairacli Levy, 1973, 55). It is traditionally used as a sedative for spasmodic coughing where there is sensitivity and pain. It is also beneficial for spasms in the GI tract, nervous excitability, hyperactivity, restlessness, irritability, headache, migraine, panic attacks, anxiety, insomnia, tremors, chorea, and convulsions. “Cow Slip gives beauty and gloss to the skin; removes

spots, blemishes, or wrinkles; sun burn; freckles; headaches caused by heat and wind; vertigo; frenzy; falling sickness; convulsions; cramps and nervous conditions; palsy and pains in the back or bladder, and urine" (Chalid Ottway, 1933, 153).

TASTE:

(herb) bitter

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, constriction

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Nervous excitability, hyperactivity, restlessness, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, panic attacks (flowers, herb).
- Migraine, headache; caused by nervousness, heat, and wind (flowers, herb).
- Vertigo, frenzy, epilepsy (flowers, herb).
- Colds, catarrh, tracheitis, bronchitis, asthma, pertussis (dried rhizome).
- Pains in the bladder, on urination (flowers, herb).
- Fibromyalgia, lumbago, sciatica (flowers, herb).
- Skin spots, blemishes, freckles, wrinkles (herb).
- Sunburn (flowers, herb).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

"If you allow leaves or stalks to be mixed in with the flowerheads this will make the taste more bitter, and you will have to use more sugar" (Donald Law, 1973, 112). Infusion of the flower heads: take a small cupful sweetened with honey, morning and night. "In a concentrated form, cowslip is an anaesthetic" (Juliette de Bairacli

Levy). Flowers in infusion: 5–6 parts to 100 parts of water (W. T. Fernie). Soak 1 pound of cowslip herb in 2 quarts of white wine for 48 hours, filter, and add 2 pounds honey. 1 tablespoonful, 3x/day for adults, 1 teaspoonful for children (Chalid Ottway).

CAUTIONS:

Cultivated varieties can cause dermatitis (Fernie).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, W. T. Fernie (1, 2, 4, 6, 7), Chalid Ottway (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8), Norman Grainger Bisset and Max Wichtl (4), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1, 2, 3).

Propolis. Bee Secretion.

Bees gather resins from tree buds (especially poplars), regurgitate it, and use it as a cement in the construction of their hive. Propolis also has an antibiotic and antiviral effect, so that as bees enter and leave the hive they are dusted with a protectant to keep the hive safe from contagion.

Adopted into human use, it is said to be a "natural antibiotic." However, I find that the important application is in dust and mold allergy, for which it is a great specific. It has a fine cleansing effect on the mouth and throat, being a specific for laryngitis. If it does not work almost instantly, it is not the right remedy. Descending the respiratory tract, it is a specific for a hot, raw bronchitis. "During the monsoon, when everything is wet and we would get a raw bronchitis 1 drop of propolis would stop it" (Julia Graves). Just a drop on the tongue disperses volatile oils through the nose, sinuses, throat, and bronchial tubes that has a soothing and antimicrobial effect. It has a similar helpful effect on the digestive mucosa and is

useful for ulcers. Entering more deeply into the organism, propolis seems to have an immune-boosting effect, increasing white cell production and stimulating the thymus.

TASTE:

pungent, bitter • warm • resinous

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- *Specific for dust and mold allergy*.
- *Mouth and gums; bad breath, sores, ulcers*.
- *Laryngitis; instantly produces the voice*.
- Tonsillitis.
- *Hot, raw bronchitis;* pneumonia.
- Gastric and duodenal ulcers.
- Arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure.
- Prostate problems, cystitis.
- Shingles, herpes.
- Dry eczema, psoriasis.
- Acne, abscesses, wounds, bruises, burns, warts, ulcers.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Tincture, 85% alcohol, 1 drop on the tongue, as needed; the propolis vaporizes and can be felt throughout the respiratory tract (Wood).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Matthew Wood (1, 2, 3, 5), Russian research (2–11).

Prunella vulgaris. Self-Heal, All Heal.

Self-heal is a member of the mint family that is predominately mucilaginous. It is native to Europe and Asia, where it has long been used in traditional medicine. It is now widely naturalized in North America. It was adopted into practice by the American Indians but was little used in the herbal practice of lay and professional doctors in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America.

Self-heal leaves easily work up into a mucilage, so that it can be picked and placed on a wound. It draws out heat and infection. The old authors considered it to be one of the most reliable woundworts available. The flower looks like a mouth and throat, hence the traditional European usage in tonsillitis. An American Indian friend took this as a signature that it is a drawing agent (looks like the mouth of a "sucking doctor"). In traditional Chinese herbalism it is used to clear heat from the liver. The late William LeSassier considered it a very important remedy for building and nourishing the kidneys. It improves diuresis, not by actively pumping the kidneys, but by strengthening them. He used it especially when there was dental decay combined with kidney trouble. This is perhaps a condition caused by inability to deal with protein properly, resulting in excess protein waste products (urates) burdening the liver and the kidneys, precipitating with calcium to weaken teeth and bones. He preferred the traditional Chinese medicine explanation: the kidneys strengthen the bones and teeth.

Gerard (1633) says, "To be short, it serveth for the same that the Bugle serveth; and in the world there are not two better wound herbs, as hath often been proved."

TASTE:

moist • mucilaginous

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- People who do not feel like they will ever recover (flower essence).
- Dental problems, tooth decay, with kidney weakness.
- Sore throat.
- Heat in the liver.
- Kidney weakness.
- Wounds, fresh or infected. Chop up the leaves into a mucilage, poultice until they fall off, put on more leaves until the wound is clean.
- Skin discolorations and lesions; insect bites; eczema (external).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The flower tops are used in Chinese herbalism, the flowering herb in European herbalism. Infusion, tincture, oil, or salve.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (European, Chinese, Native American), Flower Essence Society (1), William LeSassier (2–6), Julia Graves (1, 7).

Prunus americana, P. domestica. Wild Plum, Domestic Plum.

Plum is native to the New and Old Worlds. The genus has been cultivated (and crossed) for the perfection of their fruit, which are used fresh or

dried in the form of prunes. The latter are, of course, a popular laxative. In other regards, however, plum (wild, cultivated, European, American, or cross-bred) is not used to a great extent in Western herbalism. Yet, plum is related to some important and useful remedies, and has given "hints of potential."

Chalid Ottway (1933, 256), probably drawing on Middle Eastern sources, gives a short account of the remedy. He used the dried plum, or prune. "Plum is good for thirst; sick feeling; vomiting; stops bleeding; clears obstructions; cleans and heals cuts and wounds; kills and expels worms; sore mouth; burns; throat; breaks stones in kidney and eases passage of urine; cools the stomach." He regards it as cooling and moistening, and under the dominion of Venus, which agrees with Culpeper.

"Lately a Chicago physician whilst officiating at a reformatory, found that the boys behaved themselves much better when taking prunes in their diet than at any other time. These act, he supposes, on certain organs which are the seats and centres of the passions" (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 479). Peach leaf and hawthorn, close relatives, are likewise sedative for children and the former is traditionally given by the Cherokees to children who need discipline. Fernie classifies plum as cooling and slightly laxative.

The late Georgia herbalist Tommie Bass used wild plum bark for one purpose, for which he considered it something of a specific—asthma. I saw a case of asthma that would not respond to any other remedy I tried except plum bark. In this case it was a cultivated European plum that worked best. The use of plum bark for asthma is quite established by tradition. Hildegard von Bingen (1998, 113) recommended plum bark or leaf for a "dry cough."

LITERATURE:

Hildegard von Bingen, W. T. Fernie, Chalid Ottway, and Tommie Bass.

Prunus armeniaca. Apricot.

The name apricot is of Sumerian derivation, and appears in the most ancient herbals known. Apricot kernel and oil has been used in place of peach kernel or leaf and sweet almond oil, which it closely resembles in property.

Prunus persica, Amygdalus persica. Peach.

Peach is a native of Persia and central Asia, but is widely cultivated in mild temperate climates throughout the world. It is an old European folk remedy. Upon its arrival in the New World it was eagerly adopted by the Indian people as a food and medicine. It was also used by the settlers, including the herbalist Samuel Thomson. Peach kernel, leaf, and twig contain fruit acids and cyanogens that are strongly cooling. Cyanide turns down the Krebs cycle in the mitochondria to prevent energy production—which is why peach leaf and twig are toxic in large doses.

Peach is a superlative remedy when heat or excitation is combined with dryness. The cooling, moistening properties of the fruit are also found in the leaves and twigs. The tongue is often elongated, flame-shaped, carmine red, and dry, usually free of secretion or slightly coated, corresponding to a hot, dry state. (When the tongue is flame-shaped, carmine, and wet, think of rose or linden. When it is red and harshly dry, with cracks on the burnished surface, think of marshmallow for dryness causing heat.)

Because of the sensitivity of tissues in a dry, hot state, peach is well suited to allergies and autoimmune disease, either directly as a curative or as an assistant. It is well indicated (like its cousins rose and almond) for people with sensitive skin and tissues. It often will control hives and rashes, showing here its affinity to allergic excess. Hildegard von Bingen (1998, 109) recommended it for “one who, in various illnesses, has any kind of spots on his body.” I have seen it soften skin that is dry, scaly, red, and irritated.

Peach acts on the scalp as well. “A gentleman of about fifty showed me his head, on which an abundant growth of hair was appearing, on a part which he said had been bald for years, from the use, for a short time, of a tincture of peach pits in brandy” (Cobb, 1846, 1:144).

Peach is slightly mucilaginous and drawing, so it has been used as a poultice to bring boils to a head and draw them out. Eva Graf, who used it in this fashion, also thought that it drew out toxins and old deposits of drugs or antibiotics, “from the bones.” Peach has been used for hot fevers with lack of sweat, abscess in the lungs, tuberculosis, irritation and great sensitivity of the stomach, so that even a glass of water causes pain—hence in morning sickness. It is cooling in menopause. Peach is broadly applicable; Eva Graf knew an Indian medicine man in Idaho, Dr. Sundance, who used peach twig tea as his only remedy.

William Salmon (1710, 42, 52) spent his youth in South Carolina (which he calls the “West Indies”), where he picked up the use of peach leaves for colic or bellyache. “This is a specifick in a cholic beyond most other things and withal very safe,” he writes. “In the West-India’s (where Peach-Trees are plentiful) the disease is cured by taking three or four times syrup of peaches; or by taking a very strong decoction made of the bruised leaves of the peach-tree.” He made an “essence of peach leaf” that “purges well, and carries off the morbifick cause to a miracle; but it ought to be taken three, four, or five times, as the exigency of the disease requires.”

Sir John Hill (1740, 292) wrote, “The flowers are to be used. A pint of water is to be poured, boiling hot, on a pound weight of peach-blossoms; when it has stood four and twenty hours, it is to be poured off through a sieve, without squeezing, and two pound of loaf-sugar is to be dissolved in it over the fire; this makes an excellent syrup for children. It purges gently, and sometimes will make them puke a little. They have so frequent occasion for this, that people who have children have continual use for it.” Hill does not give the uses for children clearly: peach is cooling and calming, good for excess stimulation, restlessness, insomnia, allergies, skin rashes, vomiting, constipation, worms, and so forth. Because it is

suited to delicate and sensitive skin, nerves, and constitution, peach is an excellent remedy for children.

"In diseases of children we frequently find the stomach irritable, the nausea and vomiting being sometimes so persistent that the necessary medicines can not be taken. In such cases an infusion of the bark of the young limbs of the peach tree, given frequently in small doses, will almost invariably arrest it" (Scudder, *Eclectic Medical Journal*, 1864, 38; reprinted by Brinker, 1995).

The flowers, leaves, twigs, bark, and unopened kernels are used but the seed or kernel is too poisonous due to the high content of cyanide. The fruit and its juice can also be used for cooling and moistening.

TASTE:

sour, bitter, sweet • cool, moist • slightly mucilaginous

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Fair skinned persons with tendencies to sunburn, irritation from mild heat, allergies, autoimmune overactivity; heat and irritation of the skin and mucosa.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervousness, restlessness, insomnia; jangled nerves from bad news; overexcited children; overstimulation; pain.
- Insomnia (tea of the leaves or twigs before bed, but be prepared to go to sleep immediately because its effect is immediate) (Susan Kramer).

HEAD

- Earache (pit).
- *"Tongue elongated and pointed with red edges"* (Frederick Petersen, 1905, 49); *tongue elongated, pointed, carmine, and dry* (Matthew Wood).
- Lips cherry red.

RESPIRATION

- Upper respiratory allergies and irritation; eyes, nose, throat.
- Cough with irritation and dryness of the throat and bronchial tubes; whooping cough, chronic bronchitis, tuberculosis.

DIGESTION

- Irritation of the stomach and upper gastrointestinal tract.
- Acute tenderness over the stomach; vomiting of nervous origin; especially during pregnancy; cannot bear the sight or smell of food, even water.
- Nervous, restless babies with inclination to vomit from the least taste or smell of food; even a teaspoonful of water may be vomited up.
- Debilitating diarrhea and dysentery; cholera infantum, cholera morbus; colic.
- Gastritis, dyspepsia, diarrhea, dysentery; chronic.
- Dyspepsia, gastralgia, and nausea.
- Worms, with symptoms of heat and irritation.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Edema, probably caused by heat, irritation, and dryness of the kidneys.
- Irritable bladder with extreme tenderness over the part; retention of urine, blood in the urine, irritation.

FEMALE

- Leucorrhea.
- Vomiting of pregnancy and reflex irritation.

- Menopause.

FEVER

- Fever with heat and dryness.

SKIN

- Skin clammy, retaining water, during hot weather.

OTHER

- Has an affinity to the *vata* (ectomorphic) constitution; though not restricted to it.
- Loss of color in hair, loss of hair (with sage).
- Hives, rashes, allergic skin reactions (external).
- Pain ("beat up a handful of the fresh leaves, put them in a bag, and steam for fifteen minutes and apply") (Ralph Russell, 1911, 327).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The bark is stronger than the leaves (Tommie Bass), although the latter can be used (Matthew Wood). Heat destroys the virtues. It has been prepared by cold infusion of the kernels, small twigs, or bark of the young limbs of the present season's growth (John Scudder). Also, a maceration may be made in brandy or alcohol to produce a tincture or extract. Sugar is added to make a syrup. Dose: 1–10 drops of the tincture or extract (John William Fyfe). The kernels are cleaned and dried for making a cold decoction (Kate Gilday) or cracked and macerated in brandy, 2 ounces to a pint (Leonard Thresher). After about ten days the hydrocyanic acid starts to leak out so stop the process. Dose of the latter is 3–4 teaspoonfuls a day. John Heinerman uses the juice of the peach for similar application.

TOXICITY:

Large amounts of cyanide are poisonous so large doses with the characteristic bitter taste and smell of cyanide should not be used.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Maurice Mességué, Samuel Thomson, Constantine Rafinesque, Elisha Smith, O. Phelps Brown (12, 15), William Cook (15, 16), William Salmon (12), Daniel Cobb (17), Frederick Petersen (5), Horton Howard, Leonard Thresher, John Scudder (8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 19), John Heinerman (21), Kate Gilday, Eva Graf, Tommie Bass (2, 3, 4, 24), Phyllis Light (2, 3), Karyn Sanders (2), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 21, 22, 23), Julia Graves (6), Sondra Boyd (2, 20), Jim MacDonald (25), Susan Kramer (3).

Pulmonaria officinalis. Lungwort.

This curious plant is a member of the borage family native to shady ground in Europe. It must be one of the original wildflowers native to the European forest. The white spots on the leaves were thought to resemble mucus expectorant and thus, through the doctrine of signatures, pulmonaria came to be associated with the lungs and gained its botanical and popular names. It contains mucilage, tannins, saponins, mineral salts (especially silica), and allantoin.

Pulmonaria is used for nasal congestion, laryngitis, coughs, bronchitis, influenza, and tuberculosis. It is said that pulmonaria is for particularly advanced cases, where the connective tissue supporting the structure of the lungs has started to break down, due to inflammation and weakness. It was used when there was hemorrhage from the lungs, as in tuberculosis. It has similar uses in the gastrointestinal tract, for diarrhea, dysentery, hemorrhoids, and bleeding. The mucilage coats, soothes, and cools, while the silica rebuilds and strengthens connective tissue.

Hildegard von Bingen (1998, 23) has a different explanation for the properties of pulmonaria, considerably more odd than the white-spot equals spitting image. “If sheep eat lungwort often, they will become healthy and fat, and it does no harm to their milk. But if, as we have said, one who has a swollen lung frequently drinks lungwort cooked in wine, his lung will return to health, since the lung has the nature of a sheep.”

Although thought of in the English-speaking world as a lung remedy, in France it is known as “the cardiac herb.” Here it is used for palpitation and agitation of the heart, and tachycardia (Kenner and Requena, 2001, 157).

TASTE:

earthen, mucilaginous, astringent

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Acute bronchitis.
- Chronic bronchitis.
- Tuberculosis with emaciation, night sweats, and spitting blood.
- Palpitations.
- Tachycardia.
- Hemorrhoids, anal fissure, tuberculosis of the intestine.
- Hematuria.
- Urinary incontinence.
- Menorrhagia.
- Wounds.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are given as a tea in hot infusion to make it diaphoretic. It is combined with plantain and coltsfoot in chronic respiratory problems.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (1, 4, 5, 6), Wilhelm Pelikan (2, 3, 6, 7, 8), Norman Grainger Bisset and Max Wichtl.

Pyrus malus. Crab Apple.

The domestic apple originated in central Asia, although there is a crab apple native to North America. Apple has an ancient reputation as a healthy food. The fruit or bark has been somewhat rarely used as a medicine. The fruit contains sugars, acids, and flavonoids, while the seeds, leaves, and bark contain flavonoids including cyanogenic glycosides. Like other fruits in the rose family, apple is a cooling medicine.

With many herbs we find that one generation of writers copies the previous generation and on back through the centuries, although a close comparison shows accounts are seldom identical and each often has details of its own. The apple is not part of the standard herbal literary tradition. It seems to be a true folk remedy. Seldom does one account rely upon another, and generally it is clear that the writer is speaking from personal or community experience. Thus, there is no "official" portrait of apple that has become fixed in the literature, other than the old maxim: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." As a consequence, I have not attempted to integrate sources so much as record them. I think the result makes interesting reading.

A few things are clear about the apple, however. It is cooling and moist. Its properties can be tweaked by the stage of growth at which it is picked, the part, and the preparation.

Dr. William T. Fernie (1914, 28) offered one of the most detailed accounts in the literature. "The acids of the apple are of signal use for men of sedentary habits, whose livers are sluggish of action; they help to eliminate from the body noxious matters, which if retained, would make the brain heavy and dull, or produce jaundice, or skin

eruptions, or other allied troubles." There is a long history of using apple products for migraine, jaundice, and skin eruptions.

"Some experience of this sort has led to the custom of our taking apple sauce with roast pork, roast goose, and similar rich dishes. The malic acid of the ripe apples, raw or cooked, will neutralize the chalky matter engendered in gouty subjects, particularly from an excess of meat eating. A good, ripe, raw apple is one of the easiest of vegetable substances for the stomach to deal with, the whole process of its digestion being completed in eighty-five minutes. Furthermore, a certain aromatic principle is possessed by the apple, on which its peculiar flavor and scent depend, this being a fragrant essential oil—the valerianate of amyl—in a small but appreciable quantity.

"From the bark of the stem and root of the apple, pear, and plum trees, a glucoside is to be obtained in small crystals, which possesses the peculiar property of producing artificial diabetes in animals." Many members of this family are beneficial in high blood sugar conditions.

Although the fruits of the rose or apple clan are acid, they form alkaline carbonates that cool the stomach and reduce the appetite. Apple cider will "alkalinize very profoundly," as one of my students said (name forgotten).

In North America, for some reason, there is a history of using apple or crab apple bark. "In the United States of America an infusion of apple tree bark is given with benefit during intermittent, remittent, and bilious fevers," continues Fernie. That would be the chills and fever, regular or irregular, associated with malaria and severe influenza. Tommie Bass, the late Georgia herbalist, was still using apple bark in the late twentieth century as an alterative and cleanser. He often combined it with other plants.

Another American herbalist who used apple (the fruit, not the bark) was Ben Charles Harris (1972). He considered the sugars to be nourishing and the acids to be medicinal. He recommended eating apples to alleviate gout, arthritis, liver problems, plaque on the teeth, and kidney stones.

William LeSassier classified apple bark as a spleen tonic that was water reducing.

In Britain, Fernie continues, we "prescribe apple water as a grateful cooling drink for feverish patients." Three or four apples are sliced up whole, boiled in a quart of water with a little sugar until soft, strained, and drunk cold.

John Hill (1740, 138) says that the juice made from the crab apple is "a remedy for the falling down of the uvula [tonsillitis], better than most other applications; it is also good against sore throats, and in all disorders of the mouth."

Gerard (1633) says that the pulp of roasted apples mixed with water "never faileth in certain diseases of the raines [kidneys], which myself hath often proved, and gained thereby both crownes and credit." Gerard provides no further information about the type of condition of the reins, or kidneys, for which apple is remedial. However, Hildegard von Bingen, centuries earlier, recommended apple sap for pain and straining. She gives a very difficult set of directions to follow, involving a great deal of work to coax sap out of the tree, soak it into a deer hide belt, and wear it around the kidneys. Gerard's method is much easier, and he also gives it with his personal experience.

However, when it comes to eye problems Gerard has the difficult formula and Hildegard the easy one. "The paring of an apple out somewhat thick, and the inside whereof is laid to hot, burning, or running eyes at night when the party goes to bed, and is tied or bound to the same, doth help the trouble very speedily, and contrary to expectation, is an excellent secret." Fernie provides similar evidence from folk medicine. Hildegard von Bingen (*Physica*, 1998, 105) says that the leaves of the tree, picked in spring, are good for "fogginess of the eyes." Add an equal amount of the sap running out of the grapevine. Moisten the lids, not the inside of the lids. Many members of the rose family have been used for cataract and glaucoma. She also recommends the fresh spring shoots for migraine, liver, and spleen congestion.

Dr. Bach used crab apple flower essence for a feeling of uncleanness. Twenty-five years ago I saw a case that fit this

perfectly. A young woman was literally crying from the feeling that the rosacea that had just broken out on her face made her unclean. I tried crab apple, the relief was immediate, and the cure complete—confirmed twenty-five years later. Alas, most rosacea cases are not so easily cured.

Somewhat similar to this is the use mentioned by Dr. Ralph Russell (1911, 329), of Birmingham, Alabama. Apple, he writes, is "cooling, takes out fire, good for burns and scalds."

This collection of medical anecdotes does demonstrate some similarities, so I offer the following analysis of the apple tree.

TASTE:

(fruit) sweet, sour • cool, moist • sometimes mildly astringent (bark) bitter, sweet, sour • cool, moist • astringent

TISSUE STATE:

excitation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Headache, migraine.
- Eyes, burning, hot, running.
- Eyes, cataract, glaucoma (with grapevine drippings).
- Liver overwork, congestion, perhaps high cholesterol.
- Kidneys, straining and pain.
- Skin, burning, rosacea, burns.
- Hot fever and intermittent fever.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The fruit is juicier and sweeter; the bark, leaf, twig, and seed are bitterish and more astringent.

CAUTION:

Large doses of apple seed have killed people due to the cyanide. It is also in the bark and leaf. Small doses only (1–15 drops).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, W. T. Fernie, Tommie Bass, Ben Charles Harris.

Quercus robur. English Oak.

There is a long history of use of the European or English oak, but I have included the account of this tree in the accompanying volume of *The Earthwise Herbal* on New World plants. See *Quercus alba*. The applications in both hemispheres are nearly identical.

Ranunculus ficaria. Lesser Celandine, Pilewort, Figwort, Smallwort.

This member of the buttercup family is a distinctive and beautiful wildflower in hedges, fields, and woods throughout Europe, Asia, and North Africa. It likes moisture and tolerates shade. The yellow flower has been likened to the sun, and is widely appreciated for its beauty. It is a true spring wildflower, blossoming in February and drying up by the end of May. At that time the tubers, which look like figs or hemorrhoids, are dug for medicine. A driving rain will sometimes pull them out of the ground and pile them in ditches. It is unfortunate that this plant bears the names of other plants. The only one it has to call its own is smallwort.

The doctrine of signatures led to the use of pilewort tuber to cure hemorrhoids. It is still considered a specific for this complaint, though less often used today and not at all in North America. Culpeper (1653) reports that it “doth wonderfully help piles and hemorrhoids; also kernels by the ears and throat called the King’s

Evil," or swollen glands. For this it is used internally or externally—or simply worn about the person, as the enthusiastic Culpeper reminds us.

Smallwort possesses less acridity than other members of the buttercup or crowfoot clan. It is said to be an astringent, but it has a salty taste and probably acts on water movement through this mechanism. This is my opinion and that of my friend Christine Dennis, herbalist (OHA), of Port Burwell, Ontario. She did an "unintentional proving" during a class we had in Majorca in 2005, after which she suffered from swollen glands and unpleasant symptoms for several months.

Raphanus sativus niger. Black Radish.

This little crucifer is endowed with medicinal potency belying its humble origins. The juice of the root is used to clear gallstones and kidney stones. It is said to prevent the formation of gallstones. It decongests the gallbladder and helps the kidneys rid the blood of irritants that promote allergies and arthritis. It sooths allergic rhinitis and asthma, sedates coughs, and has been used in spasmodic conditions like whooping cough. The cholagogue of choice for Dr. Royal Lee, founder of Standard Process Laboratories.

Rehmannia glutinosa. Rehmannia Root.

This is one of the several excellent Chinese tonic herbs that have been adopted into Western herbalism in the last decades and for which there is no cognate or substitute in the Western pharmacopoeia. It is a member of the Scrophularia family, akin to foxglove (Digitalis *spp.), and is sometimes called Chinese foxglove. Its properties are not similar to that plant, however. It is not a heart remedy but a mild blood-builder. Cooked rehmannia root is used to build the blood, while the uncooked is used to sedate heat in the blood.*

Cooked rehmannia root is the pivotal herb used in traditional Chinese medicine for blood deficiency. It is sweet, indicating that it is a tonic in yin and blood deficiency, and slightly warm. Rehmannia is indicated in blood deficiency when there is a dull, pale complexion, pale lips, a pale tongue, compressible, empty pulse, dizziness, palpitations, and insomnia. It is also useful for irregular menstrual bleeding, uterine hemorrhage, and postpartum bleeding. As a remedy for yin deficiency it is used to treat night sweats, nocturnal emissions, and wasting and thirsting syndrome (tuberculosis).

Studies have shown that rehmannia root decreases anemia by increasing progesterone, the hormone that increases nutrition for mother and child. Studies also show that it lowers cholesterol and blood pressure.

Recorded side effects of rehmannia root are mild and transient. These include diarrhea, abdominal pain, dizziness, lack of energy, and palpitations. It should not be used when there are tendencies to loose stool (Bensky and Gamble, 1986).

Rhamnus frangula, R. cathartica. Buckthorn.

Buckthorn is native to Europe, but widely planted as an ornamental shrub in North America. It has proved itself to be an aggressive naturalizer that competes with native shrubs and trees so that it is very damaging to native woodlands in North America. In my neighborhood virtually nothing can stop it except sugar maple, which casts a denser shade. By spring there are few berries left to greet the returning birds from the south but buckthorn berries are still clinging to their branches. They purge the poor birds so even their good deed in acting as a food source during a scarce period is dubious. What it does for birds it can do for people; buckthorn is an old cathartic. It is so active that the bark is preserved two years before use.

Buckthorn is a strong purgative containing anthraquinones. It promotes elimination of water and electrolytes from the bowel by stimulating intestinal peristalsis, increasing transit time, and reducing absorption of fluid into the body.

The folk medical use of buckthorn as a "blood purifier" (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 410) is based on its action on the colon rather than the "bloodstream." It is used, like rhubarb root, to assist other herbs by keeping the bowels open.

Rheum officinale, R. palmatum. Turkey Rhubarb.

Medicinal rhubarb is different from the domestic garden vegetable (R. rhaponticum). *The former is native to China. It was originally shipped through Russia to Istanbul and St. Petersburg—hence, the name Turkey rhubarb. It is identical to the rhubarb used in traditional Chinese medicine. In China the plant is called* da huang, *or the "greater yellow root," because of its size and power. Contains anthraquinones, tannins, and flavonoids*.

Rhubarb root is sour, astringent, and bitter, so it is useful to reduce heat, lack of tone, and tension. It contains anthraquinones, which are purgative. In large doses it is cathartic, but its genius comes out in smaller, persistent doses, where it is used to "tonify" the bowel, removing diarrhea alternating with constipation associated with hot and constricted sensations in the abdomen. Rhubarb has the same moist, pappy, difficult-to-expel stool as its cousin yellow dock root, but more tension is present. It has a strong action on the stomach as well as the intestine.

"Rhubarb in very small doses, frequently repeated, is a most excellent remedy in vomiting caused by irritation of the stomach. It is also useful in nervous irritability which is manifested by restlessness and convulsive contraction of muscles" (Fyfe, 1909, 694). Indications are similar to those for peach leaf. "Irritation of

the stomach, with nausea and vomiting; tongue elongated and reddened at the tip and edges."

Although rhubarb is not native to North America, it fits the profile of a "badger medicine" in American Indian medicine. That is to say, it is a yellow root that moves things downward through the digestive tract. The same can be said for its cousin, yellow dock root *(Rumex crispus)*. My friend Julia Graves writes from Normandy, "I just thought to dig up this small Turkey rhubarb plant, first I ever grew. I had to go back three times to get a bigger utensil to get the HUGE root out of the ground! I thought of the inconspicuous opening of a badger's burrow, then the insides, where the holes are vast, deep, and branching out. For three leaves just about the size of my hands, I got 1 kilogram of fresh root! I understood more about badger medicines, how they burrow into the ground with a real urging downwards."

TASTE:

sour, bitter • cool • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, constriction, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Red cheeks, yellow around the eyes, nose, and mouth (cf. *Rumex crispus*), with abdominal heat, tension, constipation or diarrhea, portal hypertension.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervous irritability manifested by restlessness and convulsive contraction of muscles.

HEAD

- Hot, swollen, painful eyes; nosebleed.
- *Tongue elongated and reddened at tip and edges; excessive salivation.*

DIGESTION

- *Irritation in the stomach; nausea, vomiting.*
- Tension and cutting pain in the abdomen.
- Diarrhea; stool pappy, sour, fetid; evacuation followed by shivering, urging, constriction, pinching pains; urging with no result.
- Diarrhea; abdomen tender on pressure; sour-smelling stool; weak digestion and dyspepsia, with tendency to diarrhea, especially in children.
- Obstinate constipation; with unnatural sensation of constriction in stomach and bowels and contraction of the abdominal muscles.
- Hemorrhage; bleeding hemorrhoids; vomiting of blood with constipation.

LIVER

- Jaundice, especially when the digestive power is weak.

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea and immobile abdominal masses.

FEVER

- Fever with overstimulation, heat, irritation, free secretion of fluids, spasms.
- High fever with profuse perspiration, thirst, constipation, abdominal distention and pain, delirium, yellow tongue coating, and a full pulse.

SKIN

- Skin irritations from heat; burns and sores.

PREPARATION, TOXICITY, AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are toxic; the stalks are used as a food; the root is the part made use of in medicine. Tincture, 1–20 drops.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (Eastern, Western), Henry Lu (3, 10, 11, 12), Dan Bensky and Andrew Gamble, Rolla Thomas (4, 5, 8), Samuel Hahnemann (7), John M. Scudder (9, 12), John William Fyfe (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), Lise Wolff (1).

Ricinus communis. Castor Oil.

Castor bean is native to the tropics, but frequently grown as an ornamental annual in gardens everywhere. The bean yields a fixed oil under pressure that operates as a harsh cathartic when given internally but as a gentle laxative when applied externally to the abdomen. The plant is also the source of the toxin ricin, which is too active for use in medicine.

"The taste of castor oil is disgusting to many and unpalatable to all" (Ellingwood, 1918, 307). Given internally it causes a free evacuation followed a few days later by constipation. Given externally, however, it is a kinder, gentler, and more healing medicine. "An inunction of the oil over the abdomen is usually sufficient to produce a full laxative effect in babes. It may be continued from day to day for the cure of chronic constipation in young children. A kneading or rubbing of the bowels will stimulate peristaltic action and increase the influence of the oil."

Castor oil packs were one of the favorite remedies used by Edgar Cayce, and it was to some extent his influence that has perpetuated its use and expanded its application. He recommended castor oil packs on the abdomen for liver problems, gallbladder inflammation, constipation, intestinal disorders, poor elimination, headaches (probably from intestinal stasis), toxemia, incoordination between assimilation and elimination, between central and autonomic nervous systems, nerve irritation, epilepsy, appendicitis, and scleroderma. He advised making the packs as follows: heat some castor oil and soak flannel sheets in it. Apply them to the abdomen, more often the right side, and apply a "dry heat" (like a heating pad or hot water bottle) for an hour or so. Afterward bathe the surface with baking soda solution to remove the remaining oil and toxins eliminated through the skin. Sometimes Cayce had the oil mixed with baking soda and applied to calluses on the feet, moles, warts, and ingrown toenails. He also recommended it sometimes as a massage oil for these sorts of problems.

To purge the gallbladder, Cayce generally recommended application of the packs on the right side of the abdomen, for an hour or an hour and a half at bedtime or in the afternoon, for three days in a row, followed by a dose of olive oil and then four days of rest.

Other external methods of application include packs on the chest during bronchitis and on the breasts for milk production. Castor oil drops can also be used as a vehicle for eye and ear drops. It is also used to improve hair growth. "Apply oleum at bedtime twice a week, wash out in the morning" (Menzies-Trull, 2003, 793).

Rosa canina, Rosa spp. Wild Rose, Domesticated Rose.

Numerous members of the rose clan are extensively used in the medicine of the world. The Greek, Roman, Arabic, and Chinese physicians used them. Wild or dog rose was the standard remedy in the Roman period for rabies. The American wild rose was a favorite with the Indian people.

According to Plinius, the use of "dog rose" for rabies was introduced during the Augustan period by the mother of a centurion who dreamed that her son had been bitten by a dog and that the root of the wild rose would cure him. After his recovery, this usage was publicized by the emperor.

Rose hips (fruit) contain tannins, flavonoids, sugars, pectin, fruit acids (malic, citric, and ascorbic or vitamin C), and carotene. The taste is sour, sweet, and astringent. The presence of flavonoids and fruit acids mark rose hip as cooling. The flowers also contain essential oils and anthocyanidins. The volatile oils make them slightly warming, but the cyanogenic compounds offset this by increasing the cooling effect. They are classified as slightly warming in Chinese herbalism.

Rose is the personification of passion, and we find that rose and many of its relatives (peach, wild cherry, hawthorn, and others) reduce heat. My poetic muse tells me that these plants turn down excitement in the limbic centers, which regulate passion. The rosaceae *are primary remedies for reducing autoimmune heat and excitation.*

In traditional medicine the petals, sepals, hips, leaves, stalks, roots, root bark, and thorns of both the wild and domesticated species have been used. Salmon (1710, 956) lists fifty different preparations. The predominant taste of the hip is sour, sweet, and astringent, indicating that rose hip will check discharges associated with heat and nourish and build up the system. In Greek medicine rose hips were classified as cooling and drying in the second degree. Dioscorides (1933, 69) writes that rose "doth coole & binde, but they which are dryed doe binde more." In nineteenth-century European medicine they were still classified the same way, but the terminology had changed to "refrigerant" and "astringent" (Grieve). Today rose hips are used on the premise that they are high in vitamin C. They are also high in flavonoids, which are antioxidant—a word that basically means "cooling"—and they are widely used in cooling drinks in the summer (especially in combination with hibiscus leaves).

Although the Western tradition is universal in crediting rose hips with a cooling and drying effect, Chinese herbalism does not agree. The hips of *Rosa laevigata* (Cherokee rose) are classified as sweet, sour, *neutral,* and constricting, whereas the petals of *Rosa rugosa* are classified as sweet, slightly bitter, and warming (Lu, 1994, 161, 235). Kenner and Requena (2001), evidently reflecting the Eastern tradition, state that all parts of the rose are warming. I don't see how anyone can consider rose hips to be cooling, but maybe rose hips are different in China. This is one of the only instances I have seen of such disagreement.

Rose petals and hips are used for acute inflammatory conditions of the respiratory tract, including sore throat, free secretion, or obstruction of the nose and bronchi. It is also a remedy for chronic inflammation. It is indicated in the weakness of convalescence, old age, and delicate children. Rose also acts on heat in the digestive tract, including diarrhea, dysentery, and stubborn inflammatory conditions. Maurice Mességué recommends it to counteract the ill-effects of antibiotics on the intestinal flora. It is also used for vaginal discharge, menstrual irregularity, and yeast infection (local and systemic). Rose petal waters, lotions, and baths are used to cure arthritis associated heat—probably an excess autoimmune condition.

Rose petal conserve was the great specific for tuberculosis in the Middle Ages, a therapy popularized by Avicenna, though the recipe goes back to Dioscorides (1933, 69). "The heads being dranck does stop a loose belly and the spitting of blood." The cooling, nourishing, and astringent properties suit rose specifically to such a condition. A twentieth-century herbalist who continued to use rose for severe bleeding from the lungs was George Slack (1919, 117) of Derby. "With rhatany root and red rosebuds the author has cured many cases of bleeding from the lungs, stomach, and nose. One man's nose bled very much for several weeks, and many means had been used. His nostrils had been plugged, but of no avail; and he was brought very low and weak from the great loss of blood." Mr. Slack "made the patient a strong infusion of the rhatany root and red rosebuds, and he took a wineglassful four times a day. In one

week the bleeding stopped, and he was soon restored to his usual state of health."

Herbalist Phyllis Light gives a more specific description of indications calling for rose. "I tend to use rosehips when the mucous membranes needs to be dried up and cooled down. It helps the body eliminate more through the colon than the kidneys; whereas goldenrod goes more through the kidneys. I ask people if they're constipated. If they are constipated there is a little bit of mucus when they do have a movement. The stool is more ball-like, less formed, with mucus wrapped around or in it. The constipation is due to the fact that the stool is too damp and unformed for the colon to push it out." (Compare with *Rumex crispus*, another cooling astringent: the muscles are too weak to move out the stool, which is damp, papescent, and soft.)

"People might think this is a remedy for mucus colitis, but the problem may arise further up in the system and is just emptying out through the colon. There may be a lot of allergies and lymphatic stagnation further up in the system. To confirm this, I have the person lie down and I press up under the left rib cage to feel if the diaphragm is pressed down by congestion in the thoracic duct. When that valve is closed, there are going to be allergies, lymphatic congestion, and constipation. Everything stagnates back up the lymphatic system, all the way up to the head, sinuses, and glands in back of the head. Sometimes, when you release the thoracic duct, you can hear the gurgling and everything starts to release. With the lymphatic congestion there will usually be an irritative, nonproductive cough." Another confirmation that occurs when rose is given: the person often takes a deep breath and the chest fills more deeply with air.

In Chinese herbalism rose hips *(Rosa laevigata)* are traditionally used to control the release of semen, strengthen the kidneys, and relieve diarrhea—all actions dependent on the astringence. Modern research has shown that rose hips decreases gastrointestinal peristalsis and stops diarrhea, which can be caused by too much peristalsis. As an astringent it is contraindicated in constipation (Lu, 1994, 161). This is referring to constipation from dryness, not from

difficult expulsion from damp, wet stool, as described by Phyllis Light.

The petals of *Rosa rugosa* are also used in Chinese herbalism. They are regarded as sweet, slightly bitter, and warm. They are used to relieve congestion of *qi* and blood, and disperse blood coagulation, irregular menstruation, vaginal discharge, dysentery, mastitis, discharge of blood from the mouth, vomiting blood, pain in the liver and stomach, and rheumatism (Lu, 1994, 235).

There is a long history of usage in both the New and the Old World of rose for eye problems, though the lack of modern diagnostic terms makes the old literature difficult to interpret. The Indians used the bark of the root for eye problems. Moses Maimonides quotes his mentor on materia medica, Abu Merwan Ibn Zuhr, on the use of the petals in various eye problems. “A lotion made of the liquid of roses and sugar strengthens vision. The regular use thereof heals farsightedness.” Ibn Zuhr adds, “This has been substantiated by experience and I do not veer from using it to strengthen vision” (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:347).

TASTE:

(hips) sour, sweet • cool • astringent
(petals) sweet, slightly bitter • aromatic

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- Asthenia, anemia.
- Delicate, sensitive children (Hall); children who wet the bed (Lu).

- Children born by C-section; don't have to fight their way out, apathetic (flower essence).

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Profound anxiety.

EYES, NOSE, MOUTH

- Vision, farsightedness.
- Bleeding from the nose and gums.
- *Elongated, pointed, red/pink tongue with moisture or streamers down the sides*.

LYMPHATICS

- Red, irritated skin and mucosa, with watery deposits or stagnation of the lymphatic drainage from the upper body, head, and chest.

RESPIRATION

- Sore throat, irritative cough.
- Tuberculosis.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Vascular anomalies (especially in children); passive venous congestion; circulatory leakage, clotting, sluggishness, easy bruising, thrombosis.
- Angina.

DIGESTION

- Heat and irritation in the intestines, constipation, damp, mucus-containing stool, chronic yeast infection.
- Chronic diarrhea from excessive peristalsis; pain in the rectum.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Frequent urination, bedwetting.

- Kidney stones (phosphatic and oxalic).

SEXUAL SYSTEM

- Vaginitis, vaginal irritation, bleeding, and discharge.
- Loss of semen.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritic inflammation.
- Easily bruised.

OTHER

- Antidote to poisons; chemotherapy.
- Fatigue (leaves).
- Viral maladies (leaves).
- Smog, ill-effects.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Rose hips are the part used most frequently today, in capsule, tablet, or (seldom) tincture or glycerite. The flowers, leaves, bark, root bark, and even the thorns have all been used in traditional medicine.

CAUTIONS:

The seeds (not used in medicine) contain a glucoside and are toxic, producing torpor, vertigo, and headaches.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dioscorides (5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (1, 4, 12, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22), Henry Lu (*R. laevigata*—2, 13, 14, 16, 17), Flower Essence Society (3), Maurice Mességué, Ibn

Zuhr (5), George Slack (6), Avicenna (9), Phyllis Light (8, 13), Dorothy Hall (2, 11, 19), Matthew Wood (7), Kim Dudley (23).

Rosmarinus officinalis. Rosemary.

Both the leaves and the oil of rosemary have long been used in Mediterranean medicine. The properties are described by Dioscorides, Plinius, and Galen. The Arabic physicians considered it one of the most valuable items in the materia medica. Rosemary is mentioned in the herbals of northern Europe from the Renaissance down to the present. It has an ancient reputation in folklore as an herb for remembrance. It was used from ancient times to the Renaissance as an emblem for fidelity. Shakespeare mentions it several times. "There's Rosemary, that's for remembrance." Rosemary was popularized by Father Sebastian Kneipp and is still used in conventional medicine in Germany. The leaves contain flavonoids, proanthocyanidins, tannins, terpenoid bitters, phenols, acids, and volatile oils (1–1.5%). The oil contains borneol (16–18%), bornyl acetate (5–6%), dipentene, eucalyptol, and camphene. Both the herb and the oil are warming and stimulating.

Rosemary stimulates the metabolism, enhancing the burning and consumption of blood sugars and fats. It thus warms, cleans, and oxidizes throughout the body. Through nerve stimulation it increases muscle activity via the parasympathetic, thus strengthening the arteries, stomach, intestines, gall passages, and heart, while relaxing the sympathetic and voluntary muscles. It acts strongly on the "blood organs," especially the liver, also the heart, lungs, spleen, and kidneys. The catabolic processes of the liver are increased and more gall is produced and secreted (Gümbel, 1993, 210). Thus, rosemary is indicated in a cold, sluggish liver and gallbladder condition, where there is a pale, yellowish complexion, slow digestion, bitter taste in the mouth, and lack of energy (Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli).

The flowers “abound with a subtile detergent oil, which makes them universally deobstruent and opening,” commented Dr. John Quincy (1736, 72). Yet, rosemary is not opening through purgation. Increased bile secretion and smooth muscle activity enhance digestion and assimilation to open the bowels. Increased circulation warms, stimulates, and opens the body generally.

Rosemary “is very comfortable to the stomach in all the cold maladies thereof: helps both retention of meat, and digestion,” writes Culpeper. “It is a remedy for the windiness in the stomach, bowels, and spleen, and expels [wind] powerfully.” Father Sebastian Kneipp in his classic *Water Cure* gives similar testimony. “It cleanses the stomach from phlegm,” he comments. “The stomach will soon become sensible, i.e., will not stick fast much longer in phlegm.”

Kneipp also used rosemary as a specific for cardiac edema and congestive heart failure. Weiss especially recommended making rosemary in a resinous southern European white wine, as a heart tonic. I have used rosemary (in brandy) successfully in cardiac edema in my practice. As one person said, “It removes the fluids in a purposeful fashion, getting out the stagnant, stuck fluids, while the lasix takes the water out indiscriminately” (paraphrase). Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 132) is another herbalist who has used rosemary for congestive heart failure. She recommended it as a tea with honey. “The specific remedies for heart disorders are: rosemary and honey,” she writes. “An infusion of rosemary should be used, one level teaspoon of pure honey being added to every tablespoon of the rosemary infusion. Rosemary herb has all of the three medicinal properties necessary in heart treatment: it is tonic, cleansing, and also a nervine. Honey is the only known heart stimulant and restorant which is not a drug and which is not habit forming.” Rosemary is a “proved heart tonic” (1973, 123).

The influence of rosemary extends to the extremities. Nerves are stimulated, congealed blood is removed, capillaries are opened, and sensation is improved. This remedy is used to remove cold conditions from the limbs, including the stiffness and soreness resulting from undue muscular activity as well as that from arthritic conditions and bruises and strains. Hence, rosemary flowers “are

used in almost all nervous complaints; especially such as arise from too great moisture and cold, as they are hot and drying. In epilepsies, apoplexies, palsies, and all diseases of that kind, they are hardly omitted in prescription" (Quincy, 1736, 73).

By increasing the oxygenation and "burning processes" throughout the body, glucose levels in the blood are brought down. This strengthens all the functions of the body, but especially those of the heart and brain, which subsist on huge quantities of blood sugar (Gümbel, 1993, 213).

Rudolf Steiner taught that rosemary increased the sense of selfhood, which he related to the fire element or warmth of the body. He suggested that rosemary be used to gently warm the body and support self-consciousness by bringing a "finely distributed solution of rosemary" into contact with the skin through baths (Steiner, 1975, 190). These are used in the morning to stimulate awareness. In this manner they also help combat insomnia. However, they are not given at night because they can overstimulate the mind (Bott, 1978, 193). One of my clients uses rosemary instead of coffee to stay awake while driving. Steiner considered diabetes mellitus (type II) to be a disease of incomplete incarnation of the selfhood into the body, for which he recommended rosemary—an indication subsequently justified by anthroposophical doctors.

Dr. Rudolf Weiss (1988) gives a general picture of the person who responds to rosemary: where there is chronic circulatory weakness, including low blood pressure, and especially in young people who are "asthenic" (weak, thin, pale) and easily run-down. Rosemary is also appropriate for older people with weak circulation, sometimes due to constitutional weakness but in many cases from overwork or following weakening diseases such as influenza or pneumonia. It stimulates the appetite and is especially indicated when atonic conditions of the stomach accompany poor circulation.

The diluted oil is used externally on the skin to increase activity and circulation. It improves the water-retentive qualities of the skin, stimulates heat-discharge through a better metabolism of fats and sugars, and nourishes the skin glands. It is indicated for a pale, cool

skin with weak peripheral circulation (Gümbel, 1993, 213) and low blood pressure (Wolff, 1991, 56).

This is the favorite herb of Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 123). “I use it more than any other plant and I love it most of all.” It is “another of the few cure-all herbs of the herbalist.” She (1973, 107, 108) relies upon rosemary as her primary wound remedy. “Herbal treatment to control the flow of blood from a severe wound, and to soothe and cleanse the injured tissues, is provided by a strong infusion of rosemary or the meadowsweet plant, both flowers and leaves being used, or hyssop.” Traveling in the wilderness with her dogs as protectors she often had to treat canine wounds. “I have never stitched any of their wounds, despite some of them being deep enough to insert a hand fully inside. I have only relied on the healing and antiseptic powers of rosemary as a wound lotion (and when this was not obtainable, using the more common plantain). I have also healed the torn udders of cows, leaking milk badly.”

Rosemary is traditionally classified as warming and drying, or stimulating and astringent. However, it is moistening to the gallbladder and bowels, increases digestion and nutrition, and is therefore also indicated in dryness and atrophy as a moistening and nourishing agent.

TASTE:

spicy • warm, dry • oily, diffusive, stimulating, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Pale, thin, weak persons with poor circulation to the surface, cool skin; pale, sallow persons with weak digestion;* older persons with

cardiopulmonary edema.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Lack of self-identity and strength of personality (Rudolf Steiner).
- Depression, nervousness, anxiety.
- "Quickens the senses" (Chalid Ottway); indicated for foggy brain, lack of clarity, in deficient people (Daniel Gagnon).

HEAD

- Hair loss, thinning (oil externally).
- Weak cerebral circulation; vertigo, fainting, loss of memory, headache (oil externally).
- Headaches associated with weak liver function.
- Headache; from eyestrain, mental strain, long distance driving (oil externally).

RESPIRATION

- Young children with head colds, ear and throat problems; due to weak liver.
- Sinusitis, bronchitis, asthma.

DIGESTION

- Diminished appetite, bitter taste in the mouth, bad breath.
- Poor gastric reflexes and secretions, weak autonomic and digestive nervous system, chronic gastric catarrh.
- Bloating, vomiting; can't stop vomiting, dry heaves (tea).
- Incipient intestinal fever (very hot tea).

LIVER, GALLBLADDER, SPLEEN, PANCREAS

- Spleen congestion; chronic hypertension resulting in splenic engorgement and hypertrophy; splenic enlargement from malaria.
- *Liver function depressed; poor anabolism, low blood sugar, weakness, pallor; fetid breath, pale, yellow, gray complexion*.

- *Gallbladder reflexes depressed; poor expulsion of bile, sluggish digestion, bitter taste, indigestion in the stomach, pale, yellow complexion, lack of energy*.

CARDIOVASCULAR AND CIRCULATION

- *Cardiovascular depression; weak peripheral circulation, cold extremities;* low blood pressure; *cardiopulmonary edema* with heart palpitations.
- Arteriosclerosis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure.
- Older people with heart palpitations, pain and cramp in the region of the heart, but actually in the stomach, immediately after eating.

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea in pale, weak, cold women.
- Leucorrhea; infection, foul-smelling discharge.
- Pregnancy: to prevent miscarriage.
- Postpartum: depression.
- Menopause; mild hot flashes.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Extremities weak, unsteady, paralytic, cold, pale.
- Externally, the oil as a liniment on bruises and strains; paralytic affections; muscle tension; fits, chorea.
- Rheumatoid arthritis.
- Occipital tension (apply a saturated cotton pad to the occiput and the sacrum).
- Tired muscles; after unaccustomed exercise (external).
- Gout in hands and feet.

SKIN

- General for skin disease.

OTHER

- “Mental overactivity; brain draining energy from the stomach.”

- “Headaches of weak circulation and languid health.”
- Sedates HCl production.
- “Good for health food fanatics; i.e., cerebral relationship to stomach and food.”
- Hysteria in dogs.
- Exhaustion following typhus, fever, influenza, hepatitis.
- Bleeding wounds (external).
- Inflamed eyes (external).
- Obesity.
- Popular use for unnatural falling of hair and brightening the hair (rub infused oil into scalp).

FEVER

- Septic fever (combine with wormwood, vervain, sage, or lavender).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

“It yields its virtues partially to water, and entirely to rectified spirit of wine” (Fernie, 1914, 434). An infusion is made by pouring a cup of boiling water over a tablespoon of the leaves and flowers. Keep the pot covered, so that the volatile oils do not escape from the vessel. Father Kneipp gives directions for making a simple, elegant tincture. “A handful of rosemary is cut up as small as possible, put into a bottle, and good, well-kept wine poured upon it; white wine is preferable. Even after half a day’s standing, it may be used.” Rudolf Weiss adds that wines from southern countries, with a relatively high alcohol content, extract the active constituents best. Brandy (spirits of wine) makes a longer lasting tincture. Dose: 20–30 drops in two spoonfuls of water (Fernie). The oil is also used. Keep it out of the eyes. Rudolf Steiner introduced the use of rosemary oils in the bath as a stimulant to the higher, conscious faculties (hence, to be used in the morning, not evening).

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

High blood pressure and headaches with hot, bursting symptoms (Mailhebian). However, Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973) recommends it for high blood pressure. The essential point is to get the constitutional type correct. Rosemary is contraindicated in full-blooded, hot, sanguine persons where a stimulant would be irritating. Also observe care in nervous persons.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (5), Nicholas Culpeper, Father Sebastian Kneipp (1, 18), Rudolf Steiner (2), Philip Mailhebian (rosemary oil: 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30), Rudolf Weiss (1, 18), Dorothy Hall (6, 8, 12, 15, 27), Dietrich Gümbel (1, 16, 30), Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff (12, 38), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (15, 25), Eva Graf (13, 14, 20, 29), W. T. Fernie (18, 27, 31, 33), Chalid Ottway (4, 11, 30), William LeSassier (32, 34, 35, 36), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (7, 13, 16, 18, 23, 27, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43).

Rubia tinctoria. Dyer's Madder.

Dyer's madder is a member of the Rubiaceae family native to Europe but easily grown elsewhere and slightly invasive in some settings. This family includes both coffee and cleavers. Madder resembles the latter: it is a creeping, viny plant. However, unlike cleavers it is anchored to a long root that yields a beautiful red dye once economically important in Europe. The medicinal use of this red extract also long ago died out in Europe. However, in India and China the analogous cousin, Rubia cordifolia, *is still a very important remedy. It is used on the same indications that we find for* R. tinctoria *in the old literature, so these herbs seem to be interchangeable.*

The bright red root extract of dyer's madder long ago operated as a signature to demonstrate that the root is a blood remedy. So powerful is this dye that it can turn the bones red. Madder is used in all three major Eurasian traditions primarily as a blood remedy. There is pretty much full agreement on the uses between East and West.

In Ayurvedic medicine *Rubia cordifolia* is called *manjishta*. Vasant Lad and David Frawley (1986, 178) write that it is "probably the best alterative or blood-purifying herb in Ayurvedic medicine. It cools and detoxifies the blood, arrests hemorrhage, dissolves obstructions in blood flow, and removes stagnant blood." Although it is pungent and bitter it is cooling. This is true of a number of stimulants that act on the blood, such as yarrow and arnica. By stimulating blood flow they cool off local areas of congestion and the body in general. Thus, manjishta is used for inflammatory conditions involving the blood, female reproductive problems, herpes, bruises, and cuts. It also has a dissolving capacity, like cleavers. It dissolves gallstones and kidney stones, coagulated blood, and benign or malignant tumors.

In Chinese medicine *Rubia cordifolia* is called *qian cao gen*. It has been traditionally used to cool heat, stop bleeding, improve the circulation of the blood, remove blood coagulation, and to soothe coughing and bring up mucus. Modern research indicates that it may inhibit formation of kidney stones, stimulates the muscles of the bladder, and facilitates passage of the stones. Modern uses include chronic hepatitis and swelling of the liver and spleen. It has been shown to lower blood pressure.

Madder has fallen out of use in modern European phytotherapy and Western herbalism. William Salmon (1710, 664) sums up the ancient traditions. The decoction "opens obstructions of the viscera, and cleanses the body of tough flegm and gross humors. It provokes urine plentifully, as also the courses in women and expels the dead child and after-birth. It makes the urine red like blood, but it is from the tincture [coloring agent] of the root, like as rhubarb makes it yellow by virtue of its tincture; and opens and astringes as rhubarb purges and binds, insomuch that it is said to be good against

ruptures, and to stop the flux of the whites in women. It is profitable against the hemorrhoids or piles by fomentation, and taken inwardly to six or eight ounces, it is said to stop a diarrhea."

The decoction in honied water or mead is used to open "obstructions of the gall, liver, and spleen, and is profitable against the yellow jaundice, hypochondriack melancholy, and is good for such as have the palsie, numness, and trembling of the limbs." A special decoction in wine is called "quinsey madder," and is used for tonsillitis, both drunk and gargled.

Externally madder root is used on green wounds, old wounds, running sores, ulcers, and fistulas, and is "excellent" for bruises. A hot bath with the leaves, stalks, and roots in water hot as can be borne is "good against the palsie, gout, sciatica and rheumatick pain," and to provoke the courses and remove filth from the womb.

One of the few nineteenth-century physicians to use madder was Dr. James Compton Burnett, who applied it based on the doctrine of signatures for anemia caused by the spleen destroying too many red blood cells (hemolytic anemia). He claimed success. I gave this remedy for that problem many years ago; the woman reported that it was palliative.

In my experience, *the specific indication indicating madder is evidence of congealed blood of a blue/gray coloration, visible in the veins about the wrists, nose, mouth, eyes, tongue, etc., with red on the more fleshy cheeks and tissues*.

TASTE:

bitter, sweet, pungent • cooling

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

RESPIRATION

- Tonsillitis (cf. *Galium*).
- Soothes the cough and brings up mucus; cuts tough phlegm.

CIRCULATION, BLOOD, AND HEART

- *Complexion blue/gray around veins, red on fleshy tissue; demonstrates blood stagnation and heat.*
- Bleeding in green wounds.
- Herpes.
- Bruises.
- Hemorrhoids.
- High blood pressure.
- Toxic blood: old wounds with running discharges; sores and ulcers, fistulas discharging pus.
- Anemia.

LIVER, GALLBLADDER, AND SPLEEN

- Gallstones.
- Swollen liver, hepatitis.
- Swollen spleen.

KIDNEYS

- Scanty urine.
- Kidney stones.

FEMALE

- Leucorrhea.
- Excess menstrual bleeding.
- Brings away the afterbirth.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The roots are used per docoction or tincture.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

In a person with no blood stagnation.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Vasant Lad and David Frawley (4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 17), William Salmon (1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18), Matthew Wood (3, 17).

Rumex acetosella. Sheep Sorrel.

Sheep sorrel is a common weed on poor, sandy soils. It is native to Europe but widely naturalized in North America. It is sour like wood sorrel (Oxalis sp.) *and its cousins garden sorrel* (Rumex acetosa) *and yellow dock leaf* (Rumex crispus); *all contain oxalic acid*.

John Gerard reported the use of sheep sorrel to quench extremely hot and feverish conditions—this matches its sour flavor. It jumped the great water and became a remedy in the New World. Samuel Henry (1814, 232) used it in "inflammatory habits," and to remove wens or tumors. "With the leves of sheep sorrel, I cured a large soft wen, which a man had on his scrotum for twenty years, which hung down as big as the egg of a goose." The cases he cites were noncancerous, but soon sheep sorrel developed a following in this complaint.

Horton Howard tells us that sheep sorrel was held a great secret for cancer in the Midwest in the 1830s. A salve was used externally on skin cancer. By the early twentieth century it was known as a cancer remedy. Rene Caisse learned about it from a patient who had been to an Ojibwe medicine man and introduced it into herbal medicine as a cancer remedy. This has given rise to many misconceptions about sheep sorrel. It is not native to North America and it is not a traditional Anishinabe Ojibwe medicine. It has been

widely used with success in some cases of cancer. I saw it stop lupus in one case. The woman is still lupus-free fifteen years later.

"Sorrel quenches thirst; cools hot fevers; fainting; inflammation; regulates overheated blood; increases appetite; kills and expels worms; heart; jaundice; itch; ringworms; sore mouth; ripens, breaks, and heals boils, etc." (Chalid Ottway, 1933, 263). "Eats away proud flesh and disease tissue—takes out the core of boils—good for running boils, carbuncles, and sloughing ulcers." Soak in vinegar 20 minutes and apply (Ralph Russell, 1911, 328).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are used, fresh or dried. Tincture, 1–10 drops, 3x/day. Garden sorrel and yellow dock leaves can be used as a substitute, at least for cooling.

CAUTIONS:

Contains oxalic acid, toxic in large and repeated internal dosage. Do not use longer than three weeks without stopping for a week.

LITERATURE:

John Gerard, Samuel Henry, Horton Howard, Rene Caisse, Chalid Ottway, Ralph Russell.

Rumex crispus. Yellow Dock Root, Curly Dock.

Yellow dock root is a member of the knotweed or Polygonaceae family. It is defined very broadly as an alterative and laxative in modern books. Modern authors latch on to the fact that it contains anthraquinones, which supports these traditional uses. However, the literature is vague about specific indications. I have had to discover the properties of this

plant the hard but best way—by experience. Thus, I use yellow dock root for very specific indications.

The leaf of yellow dock is sour, like the leaves of its cousins sheep sorrel and garden sorrel. It is also somewhat astringent. In the root of the dock these tastes and properties are modified by the addition of bitters. Thus, the plant is cooling (sour), binding or drying (astringent), cleansing, laxative, and alterative (bitter). In terms of the doctrine of signatures, yellow dock is a yellow, man-shaped root that helps downward movement in the digestive tract. This is a picture of a "badger medicine" in American Indian practice. My friend Kim Dudley, herbalist in Canberra, Australia, recognized the description and commented from his experience, "Yellow dock is for excess badger energy." That would be too much fire in the stomach and digestive tract, too much appetite, and too much emotional energy. In practice I have used it for large, bear type people (adrenocortical dominance). However, Richard Hool, quoted below, used it for weakness and debility.

Yellow dock root is indicated in cases where there is heat in the gastrointestinal tract. It is well indicated by an elongated, pointed tongue with red on the sides, tip, or middle, often with a thick or thrushy coating on the sides or back—it is indeed a remedy for thrush. The facial skin is usually red on the checks, showing heat, with yellow around the eyes, nose, and mouth, showing stagnation in the digestive tract (Lise Wolff). Often there is an overabundance of saliva, showing that there is digestive overactivity and excessive appetite, and excessive hydrochloric acid, with esophageal reflux and burning. In more severe cases there may be heat in the small intestine or colon causing Crohn's disease or colitis. The stool is frequently moist, pappy, and difficult to expel, with an unfinished feeling and, sometimes, hemorrhoids. These may be bleeding, as heat irritates the capillaries. In other cases, there is constipation.

I gave yellow dock root in one case of colitis, with 15–20 stools a day, where a colostomy was supposed to be performed in two days

if the bloody stools did not stop. She was constipated for the next two days and is still well, many years after.

Too much is made of the small dose of anthraquinones found in yellow dock root in the modern literature, where chemical constituents are given excessive prominence. These increase the peristaltic action of the muscles of the intestines, but in yellow dock they are found in such small quantities that we should not make too much of them. The plant is also an astringent, which operates in the opposite fashion, to restrain the bowels. Yellow dock is really indicated in cases where the bowels tend to be loose but at the same time are difficult to expel, due to weakness of the rectal muscles or the intestinal muscles in general. For support in this view of the subject I will quote Richard Hool (1922, 84). For some reason he used *Rumex hydrolapathum* (great water dock), though most practitioners would use *R. crispus*. He gives many indications and uses that are not well developed elsewhere in our literature.

"Its laxative properties are not displayed, except when given in large doses, and not even then if a considerable degree of hepatic torpor (sluggish liver) exists. It will be necessary, therefore, to use in such cases suitable mild laxatives in connection with the preparation of the great water dock. When used to an extent sufficient to affect the bowels sensibly it reacts as a mild astringent, hence it is frequently employed in those cases where a mild astringent is indicated, as in the asthenic forms of diarrhea and dysentery, and in the diarrhea of phthisis or consumption." This would be in cases where there is diarrhea from weakness.

"In cholera morbus its neutralizing properties destroy the excess of acid in the stomach and bowels, and with the tannin quiets the irritation, and allays the sickness and vomiting; while the iron tones up and strengthens the muscles and walls of the stomach and bowels. The diarrhea ceases in consequence, and the patient is in a state of convalescence. It has the same effect in dysentery (red or white) and simple diarrhea." Again here we see the emphasis on removing excess acid in the stomach and strengthening the walls of the GI tract. Yellow dock is high in iron and has been used for iron deficiency anemia, but the relationship is probably more complex

than this. Iron is assimilated through the stomach (not the intestine) and requires good quality secretion of hydrochloric acid.

"In all cases of nervousness, nervous debility, fits, and palpitation it will be found an excellent remedy, as on account of the phosphorus it contains it forms a food for the brain and nervous system, and thereby strengthens and equalizes the nerve current and allays irritation. The predisposing causes being overcome, the above-mentioned affections cease.

"In dropsy, retention of urine, stone and gravel in the kidneys, bladder, and uterus, in Bright's disease, and in cases of gallstone, sluggish and torpid liver, the properties of great water dock are highly useful, and will be found an excellent remedy. The potash and nitrate of soda in these cases are beneficial, as by their solvent and diuretic properties stony and gravely deposits are dissolved and expelled from the organs affected by them, and the urine or bile retained by them is liberated, and in case the structure of the organs affected has been ruptured or excoriated by the passage of the stone or gravel, the tannin and iron, with their healing, strengthening and astringent properties, gives strength to the affected parts and promotes speedy healing." My friend Julia Graves used yellow dock root successfully in a case of chronic hepatitis B in India; the patient was up and out of bed the next day and improved thereafter.

"In impurities of the blood, the oxalic acid and the sulphur it contains are useful, and for this reason great water dock is a remedy for scurvy, scrofula, and skin diseases, and will be found especially useful in the treatment of old wounds, boils, sores, etc.; also to relieve pain in burns and scalds, as it allays the severe pain known as the 'fire,' and cools and tones the affected parts. It may be taken internally, and also used externally as a lotion.

"A gargle prepared from great water dock is extremely useful in ulcerations of the tongue and mouth, also in relaxed and elongated uvula, sore throat, etc. The powdered root makes an excellent dentifrice, strengthening the gums, healing sores, and hardening them."

Another English author with something interesting to say about yellow dock root is John Skelton (1878, 159). He recommends it for

the treatment of diabetes mellitus. “Our general mode of treatment is to attend to the digestion, and wash the body every night and with a decoction of common dock. For this purpose, boil as many of the roots and leaves as you think proper, in water sufficient to cover the whole; let it cool, and rub the body well down with a coarse cloth, put to bed, and give freely of queen of the meadow tea.” In addition he gives a dose of lobelia, and, if the bowels are confined, a purgative. He also recommends a medicine made from sumach berries, queen of the meadow, columbo root, a pinch of cayenne, and lemon. I certainly agree with his choice of sumach and gravel root (queen of the meadow) for the excessive urination of diabetes mellitus. I also have found that there are few remedies to compare with yellow dock root for a rampant appetite.

The cooling effect of yellow dock root is not well appreciated. Observe on a hot summer day that cattle will lie on the yellow dock plants in the moist parts of the pasture. Or nibble a leaf on a hot day to prove the point.

TASTE:

(root) slightly sour, bitter • cool, damp • astringent, “moldy” (leaves) sour • astringent

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, relaxation, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Yellow around the eyes, nose, and mouth with reddish, often dry cheeks.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Fractious, irritable sleep; does not give needed recuperation; especially in young girls at puberty.

HEAD AND RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

- Throat swollen, sensitive, and dark red, with little pain or absence of pain.
- Nursing sore mouth and ulceration of the mucosa of the mouth (thrush).
- *Tongue elongated, pointed, red, with patches of white on the back or in mouth.*
- Irritable cough, worse in cold air.

DIGESTION

- Slow digestion; food sits in the stomach, like a brick, in the colon.
- Diarrhea, dysentery, colitis; of aged persons, infants, nursing mothers.
- Diarrhea, especially in the morning; exhaustive; scanty, bloody, offensive, colicky pains before and after passage, sinking at the stomach.
- Pain in the lower back caused by constipation; the patient is not necessarily aware of the lessened elimination, but of the pain.
- Hemorrhoids, with bleeding, itching, smarting, poor expulsion of stool (cf. *Polygonum hydropiper*, a cousin).

LIVER

- Torpid or sluggish liver, gallstones.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Gravel, Bright's disease, edema, retention of urine.

FEMALE

- Menstrual irregularities with anemia; amenorrhea, vicarious menstruation; particularly in young girls and women, at puberty, with nervous symptoms predominant.

- Pregnancy: anemia (with nettles).

SKIN

- Red, damp, corrosive skin conditions.
- "Chronic erysipelas, or an inflamed puffiness of the skin, boil an ounce of the dry crushed root in a pint of water, strain through a fine cloth, and take a wineglassful 3 times a day" (Neil, 1998, 43).
- Ringworm; 1 cup in a pint of vinegar, boil down to a half pint, cool, strain, and apply with a soft cloth (Ralph Russell, 1911, 326).

OTHER

- Fetid breath, sweat, urine.
- "Brain and nervous affections, nervous debility, fits, palpitation."
- Diabetes mellitus (rub the body with a decoction).
- Ulcers, foul, mortifying (external wash).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The root is collected after going to seed in midsummer and used by decoction or tincture. Usual dose of the tincture, 5–30 drops (Fyfe), or 20–40 drops twice a day (Gagnon). The looser the stool, the smaller should be the dose (William LeSassier). I use 1–3 drops, 3x/day and find that quite sufficient whether the person is loose or constipated. Water dock *(Rumex aquaticus)* should not be used in place of curly dock. The taste is not the same, though the appearance is very similar.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

"Use cautiously when a history of kidney stones is present" (Gagnon, 2000, 96).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Lise Wolff (1), Frobush, quoted by John William Fyfe (2, 3, 4, 8, 9), homeopathic provings (5, 6), J. I. Lighthall (7), David Milgrom (10), Matthew Wood (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16), James Neil (17), Ralph Russell (18), Finley Ellingwood (4), Richard Hool (3, 4, 11, 12, 13), John Skelton (20), Daniel Cobb (21).

Ruscus aculeatus. Butcher's Broom.

This is a member of the lily family native to dry slopes in the Mediterranean region. It is somewhat similar to asparagus in appearance.

Butcher's broom is an old folk remedy in Europe—it is little used in North America. Dioscorides recommended it for lack of appetite and as a diuretic in dropsy and urinary obstructions. Culpeper reports that it is used to knit together bones and joints. He proclaims it "a plant of Mars, being of a gallant cleansing and opening quality." It opens the skin and kidneys. This may be due to its ability to increase circulation. It also opens the liver or gall ducts. Likewise the lymphatic glands, reducing "scrofulous swellings"—that is, swollen glands.

Modern research has shown that ruscus contains steroidal saponins similar in structure to cortisol and similar to those found in wild yam. They reduce inflammation and hemorrhage. There appears to be a strong action on the venous system, so they have been used especially for varicose veins and hemorrhoids.

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Lack of appetite.
- Diabetic retinopathy.
- Phlegm in the chest (decoction with honey).

- Lymphatic swellings.
- Gravel, edema.
- Venous insufficiency, edema of the legs, swollen ankles, cramp, jaundice, constipation, phlebitis.
- Hemorrhoids, anal fissure.
- Arthritis.
- Broken bones, joints out of alignment.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The fleshy rootstock is the part traditionally used in herbal medicine and still used in modern pharmacy. A decoction is made by boiling a half ounce of the fresh, bruised root in a pint of water. Considered to be safe.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dioscorides (1, 5), Nicholas Culpeper (9), Maude Grieve (3, 4, 5, 6, 7), Rudolf Weiss (6, 7), Christopher Menzies-Trull (2, 6, 7, 8).

Ruta graveolens. Rue.

Rue is one of the most northerly members of the citrus or Rutaceae family. It possesses the characteristic stimulating, diffusive properties of that family (cf. Xanthoxylum, Citrus aurantium*). It is native to sunny, open slopes in southern and central Europe, but easily cultivated in gardens far to the north—it self-propagates even in Minnesota. Rue has been used since the most ancient times in European herbal medicine and is mentioned by Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Plinius, and Galen. During the Middle Ages it held a prominent place in Catholic folk-religion and medicine. It is probably the single most important remedy in Latin American folk medicine, but is little used in northern Europe or North America.*

Ruta had fallen into relative obscurity in professional medicine when Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, gave it a homeopathic proving. It produced a total of 287 symptoms. J. H. Clarke comments, “Hahnemann’s proving shows how largely the old uses were founded on a homeopathic relationship.” However, the vulnerary or wound healing “power of Ruta does not appear to have been known before the provings were made.” Hahnemann discovered the affinity of Ruta to strains, sprains, bruises, blows, and contusions. Since that time, Ruta has found a niche in the homeopathic materia medica revolving around this affinity. However, the deeper, internal organ-affinities and psychological profile of the remedy have not been brought out in homeopathy. For these we must turn to Australian herbalist Dorothy Hall. She describes a state of passive venous congestion in persons who strain hard to suppress their unpleasant emotions (anger, frustration, helplessness), who are afflicted with great tension in the vascular system.

Ruta also is an old cancer medicine. Dr. Robert Cooper, a late-nineteenth-century homeopath with herbal leanings, developed this side of its profile. It seems likely that ruta helps remove pathological vasculature and stagnant blood associated with cancer.

TASTE:

pungent, astringent • hot • nauseating and diffusive

TISSUE STATES:

depression, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Venous congestion, seen in reddened vessels of the eyes (bloodshot); reddened back of the neck when embarrassed or

made to look foolish.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Holds anger, misery, and frustration under great pressure; occasionally lets go of it in fits of rage; this accompanied by venous congestion and circulatory tension; high blood pressure; conducive to vascular accidents, strokes, heart attacks.
- Results of straining; on the personality or the muscles of a single organ (eye, digestive tract, uterus, bladder, extremities); repetitive strain (cf. *Rhus toxicodendron, Polygonatum spp., Symphytum spp*.).
- Mind appears calm, phlegmatic, in control, but suppresses anger, frustration, helplessness.
- Tendency to be quarrelsome, contradictory, cross, suspicious; fears he is being deceived, or the results of deception; personal dissatisfaction, depression, and anxiety as from a troubled conscience.

EYES

- Eye problems; from straining the eyes, by working in poor light, doing fine work, looking at the computer too long; watery, sensitive.

DIGESTION

- Gastric problems due to straining of the gastric muscles and ligaments through injury; corrosive, irritating conditions of the mucosa of the stomach and digestive tract.
- Congestion of blood in the portal vein resulting in intestinal torpidity, anal prolapse, inactive anal sphincter, constipation, hemorrhoids, toxemia, pressure on the heart through the return circulation, stagnation of blood in the pelvis, uterine torpidity, varicose veins, and menorrhagia; straining of the muscles of the intestines contributes to some of these problems.
- Hard, dry, scanty stool, with unsuccessful urging and straining; or involuntary release of stool (especially on bending over)

without urging; much flatulence; prolapse of the anus.
- Constipation, swollen rectal veins, hemorrhoids.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Urinary problems with straining or urging prominent; pressure in the bladder after urination without emission of urine; involuntary urination at night in bed or in the daytime during motion; frequent urging; nocturnal enuresis; gravel with straining.

FEMALE

- Pelvic congestion, menstrual pain and cramp, worse before the period, better by onset of the flow; straining of muscles, tendons, and ligaments of the uterus; profuse, irregular, feeble, and too early menstruation, followed by mild leucorrhea; corrosive leucorrhea after suppression of the menses.
- Varicosities in the legs; enlarged, twisted, purple veins; throbbing and pain after long standing or long sitting.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Arthritis; “one of the most useful remedies in this affection, especially when the pains are aggravated during rest and in damp and cold weather, ameliorated by motion; pains as from a blow, fall or as if crushed, aggravated by touch, or bending the affected joint; rheumatic paralysis of the carpal or tarsal joints; sad, depressed disposition.”
- Pulled tendons, sprains, strains, bruises; affinity to the flexor tendons particularly.
- Blows to the periosteum and nerves, resulting in hard swellings, sometimes blue, ganglions on the nerves of the wrist; particularly when accompanied by erysipelatous inflammation.
- “Injuries of the bones and deep-seated joints, when the pains are of a pressive and bruised character. Mechanical injuries of the tarsal and carpal joints, or rheumatic paralysis of these joints” (Hoyne).

- Scoliosis, if the problem is in the tendons.

OTHER

- "Gangrenous tumor or cancer of the uterus." 5 drops, 3x/day (Sinha).

PREPARATION, CONTRAINDICATIONS, AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are collected in late summer; they can irritate the skin and mucosa. Tincture, 1–3 drops (Hall, Sinha). Not to be used during pregnancy.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Samuel Hahnemann (6, 15), Temple Hoyne (7, 11, 14, 17), Robert Cooper, homeopathic provings and clinical experience (3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 16), Dorothy Hall (1–4, 8, 13), Yadubir Sinha (19), Julia Graves (18).

Salix alba. White Willow.

This is the European willow, now much cultivated and naturalized in the New World. Willow bark is famous as a source of salicylates, the "active ingredient" in aspirin. As such it is used for fever, headache, and arthritis. Unlike aspirin, the mix of salicylates and natural ingredients found in willow does not irritate the stomach and cause ulcers. White willow has been used for passive hemorrhages, atonic menstrual bleeding, loose stool, and chronic and curdy diarrhea. It is a Bach flower remedy. Properties are similar to those of *Salix nigra* (see the companion volume of *The Earthwise Herbal* on New World plants).

Salvia officinalis. Sage.

Sage is a member of the mint family native to the Mediterranean region but much more widely grown in gardens. There are numerous varieties and species of Salvia, *many of which have the same properties as the* officinalis. *The great white sage* (Salvia apiana)*, native to California, can be used in place of garden sage. It is more stimulating and warming, but less astringent. On the uses of different sages it might be well to quote William Turner (1551, 275): "Dioscorides maketh but one kind of Sage, but … now are there found more kinds, the which, though they differ one from another much in roughness and smoothness, in greatness and smallness, and in diversity of colours, yet in my judgment do agree in one virtue and property." The leaves are the part used in herbalism; they contain fixed and volatile oils (including thujone), tannins, and bitters*.

Sage is astringent, oily, and slightly warming, so it acts on three tissue conditions—relaxation, atrophy, and depression—or a combination of them. It possesses virtues almost too numerous to comprehend under a single heading. Michael Moore (2003, 228) came to the same conclusion as I have about this genus. "Our sages are complex plants, with a variety of physiologic effects," he writes, and he considers a complete rundown of constituents "hopeless."

When we have two herbalists as different as Michael Moore—a pharmacological genius, if I may term him such—and myself—an "energetic" herbalist—coming to the same odd conclusion, we see evidence that there is a great underlying bedrock of Truth in herbalism that can be discerned by experienced students of the field, no matter what their philosophy or background, because herbs are consistent—their properties do not change with the philosophy. However, as Moore points out, the properties of sage do change with the method of preparation. The hot tea brings out the aromatics and is therefore useful as a stimulant to sweating, salivation, and internal secretion. The cold tea will decrease secretions, including sweating, salivation, mucus production in mouth, throat, and lungs, and lactation—it is the great medicine for curbing milk production. The lukewarm tea is bacteriostatic and astringent, hence beneficial in sore throats.

Where do we start? Perhaps best with the most simple use of sage in cooking as an ingredient to render fatty meats more digestible. Because it contains small amounts of bitters and oils, sage mildly stimulates the gallbladder to greater activity, releasing bile to improve the digestion and absorption of fats and oils. Bile also facilitates the eliminative function of the bowels, while the increased uptake of fats and oils improves the lipid economy of the body. Lipid nutrition and elimination seem to be improved all the way to the cellular level. Steroids and sex hormones dependent on fats and oils are probably better produced and transported to do their work. The lipid and water content of the body is built up; hence sage combats drying and aging. The skin and the tendons are strengthened.

A keynote symptom indicating sage is *withered, dry skin and withered tendons*. When we go to find the tendons they seem to have disappeared. The skin is strengthened by sage to retain fluids; therefore, it is used in night sweats where the body is losing fluids by perspiration and for dry, withered skin. "In people with little tendency to sweat it will act to stimulate perspiration, and in those who sweat heavily, it will act as an antiperspirant" (Husemann and Wolff, 1982, 331).

Sage has an old reputation in gum and throat problems, canker sores, sore throat, swollen glands, and hoarseness. It is nearly a specific for a sore throat. Here its astringence comes into play. “It has an austerity upon the palate,” writes John Quincy (1736, 72), “and makes a very good gargarism; especially if it be sharpen’d with a little acid.” Sage tea, sweetened with honey and lemon, is an old specific for sore throat, and is quite delicious as a drink. Here the more stimulating *Salvia apiana* can be substituted if available.

Sage is sometimes used, like a number of astringents (bilberry, raspberry, bayberry), for cataract.

Sage tea is not uncommonly used for simple fever, especially where there is a sore throat. “It makes an excellent liquor, after the manner of tea, in fevers, and is mighty grateful and cooling, with the addition of a little lemon-juice, which with the red sage makes it of a delightful colour” (Quincy, 1736, 72). It acts deeply when there is stress on the nervous system from fever. It is an old remedy for fevers with reduction of consciousness, delirium, drowsiness, and lethargy. However, it is also used in the opposite kind of conditions, where there is restlessness, spasm, and convulsion associated with low, prostrating fevers. Sage can preserve the nervous system when it is under profound assault by viral, bacterial, and febrile diseases. It is indicated when these diseases cause lethargy and drowsiness, and is contraindicated in restlessness and tension associated with high fever and activity.

The use of sage in convulsion and shaking is established all the way back to the school of Salerno. This symptom is homeopathic, since prolonged use of sage can cause convulsions. Problems are prevented by not using it in large, prolonged doses.

One aspect of European sage that is little known is its capacity to thin the blood and remove coagulated blood. Here it shows the same sort of properties as the Chinese sage, *S. miltiorrhiza*. It reduces clotting in the blood vessels without releasing dangerous clots that would cause heart attacks, strokes, or thrombosis. I was first made aware of this fact from the lecture notes of Eva Graf (1978). Subsequently I have found *S. officinalis* serviceable in a number of cases where there was a dangerous coagulation of blood. One

individual had clots on his arms where his father grabbed him to save him from being swept out to sea forty years previously. These and newer, life-threatening clots were both removed. A woman with very complex problems didn't want to take blood thinning drugs because of the side effects. Sage served the purpose. She also found that it removed a lipoma, when administered externally—here the affinity to oil processes is shown. Another woman with a hemangioma had dark, prominent, unsightly veins that were greatly reduced in prominence by the external use of sage. Eva Graf used sage when veins were prominent, dark, and prone to ulceration and hemorrhage.

It is likely that sage has an influence on the endocrine system. It reduces appetite, sexual desire, and lactation, which are controlled by the hypothalamus. Because the hypothalamus is more or less the master gland of the endocrine cascade, reading the blood to alter hormonal secretions, sage must therefore act deeply on the endocrine system, and thus on the regulation of temperature and liquids in the body, as well as reproduction. Anthony Godfrey, ND, of Toronto, comments that sage "regulates virtually all fluids—blood, lymph, milk, sweat, urine—to maintain a healthy balance."

Alabama herbalist Phyllis Light tells us of a very important hormonal usage for sage. She says that it is specific for the *transition from fertility levels of estrogen to post-menopausal levels. In other words, it helps the adrenal cortex take over the manufacture of sexual hormones as the gonads atrophy*. I have often used this valuable insight with success many times. It is specific for *drying out at menopause*, or *andropause*. Look for drying out of the tendons and skin.

Herbalist Amy Mynel provided one of my favorite case histories for sage. A thirty-six-year-old man, thin and elegant, was always thirsty, drinking water, but drying up. "I feel like I'm turning into an old man," he said. Very fine gravel was passing in the urine. Dry, withering, and soreness in the penis. Tendons tight, dry, rigid, tense. Copious, very frequent, clear urination. Liquorice and sage were given. After two months, no gravel was passing, urination was normal, tissue was more flexible and less dry, and he felt much better.

While Samuel Thomson (1841) was on Nantucket Island a raging intestinal fever broke out that caused an epidemic of encephalitis in children. The last remaining child in a family that had lost four children already pleaded with her parents to let the herb doctor treat her, rather than the others, who had failed. By the time he arrived she was unconscious, but he brought her safely to recovery with infusion of sage leaf.

TASTE:

pungent • warm • oily, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

relaxation, atrophy, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *Older persons with dryness of the skin, hair, mucosa, tendons; drying up of secretions*.
- Weak, debilitated persons, sensitive persons, children, old people; prone to colds, flu, coughs, which begin with dryness, soreness of the throat; with weak digestive powers, bloating, and flatulence.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Mental lethargy, depression, melancholy, poor concentration, loss of memory; “dull and heavy spirit” (Matthioli).
- Typhoid and brain fevers with nervous tension, restlessness, insomnia or drowsiness, lethargy, unconsciousness.

HEAD

- Loss of hair, fading hair color, dandruff (external rinse).
- Running sinuses, postnasal drip, colds.
- *Gums*, sore, bleeding, ulcerated, inflamed, receding; canker sores; inflammation of tongue.

RESPIRATION

- *Throat sore*, dry, ticklish; sometimes descending into the lungs, resulting in dry, irritable cough, followed by secretion of

mucus, which dries out, resulting in mucus difficult to raise; voice loss; weak and spasmodic cough reflexes.
- *Sore throat, swollen glands, tonsillitis, pain on swallowing, laryngitis* (tea with honey).
- Palliative for tuberculosis; with night sweats, emaciation, swollen glands.
- Muscular tension and pain in the upper body, shoulders, and chest; associated with lung conditions; after continuous coughing.

DIGESTION

- Appetite feeble; stomach "weak and windy" (small doses) (Child).
- Atonic digestive mucosa with increased secretion, or lack of secretion.
- Indigestion with weakness and debility; difficulty digesting fats and oils, gas.
- Stomach dry, with bloating and flatulence.
- Pain in the side.
- Parasites (powdered leaves, taken freely in molasses).
- Chronic diarrhea, dysentery, with debility.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Increased secretion of urine with low specific gravity; with debility; cystitis.

FEMALE

- Excessive or deficient sexual desire; infertility; dryness, lack of vaginal secretion; lack of bleeding, amenorrhea.
- Pregnancy: morning sickness.
- Postpartum: mother's grief when the baby dies.
- Lactation: dries up milk; contraindicated during lactation.
- Breast cysts.
- Menopause: helps the body switch from ovarian, fertility levels of estrogen to adrenal, maintenance levels; menopausal hot

flashes and night sweats.

MALE

- Excessive or deficient sexual desire, sexual debility, spermatorrhea.

SKIN

- *Excessive, debilitating perspiration, skin soft and relaxed, with enfeebled circulation to the extremities, which are cold; feet sweat and are cold.* Contraindicated when the night sweat is preceded by hectic fever and dry, harsh skin.
- *Skin dry, withered, like a sage leaf; lichenification*.
- Insect bites; wounds, bleeding.
- Cold sores, herpes.
- Lipoma.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Tendons dry, weak, malnourished, flaccid, or tight*.
- Pains in limbs and joints; arthritis; worse from cold and damp.
- Epilepsy, palsy, shaking, trembling.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM AND BLOOD

- Deterioration of the veins; bleeding, varicosities; in diabetes and other diseases (cf. Chinese red sage, *Salvia miltiorrhiza*).
- *Blood stagnation; removes clots and coagulation without causing strokes, etc.; improves circulation and cardiovascular function*.
- *Veins blue/black*.
- Hemangioma (cf. *Sambucus, Aesculus hippocastanum*).

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Gallbladder colic.

FEVER

- Brain fever.

- Flu; intermittent fever and chills.
- Headache accompanying measles and eruptive fever.
- Hectic fever; exhausting night sweats (fast morning and night, drink cold sage tea continually).

OTHER

- Gravel.
- Yeast infection.
- Ulcers.
- Excessive salivation.
- Pregnancy: to prevent premature delivery (Agrippa von Nettesheim).
- Insomnia; “a cupful of the tea taken at bedtime” (George Slack).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

A pinch of the fresh or dried leaf (1–3 grams) is infused in a cup of steaming water. Add honey and lemon for flavor. The tincture or fluid extract of the fresh or dried leaves can be used in doses of 3–30 drops, 1–3x/day.

CAUTIONS:

Sage is not recommended for prolonged dosage (longer than three weeks). It probably also has a too-drying effect when used for prolonged periods. Even in short duration, sage should not be used during lactation, unless the mother desires to dry up the milk.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Sage is not appropriate in active, excited conditions.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (1–10, 13–21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (2, 3), Samuel Thomson (4, 40), Tommie Bass (5), Matthew Wood (1, 4, 6, 19, 24–27-confirmed, 29, 30, 36-confirmed, 37, 38, 39), William LeSassier (11), Elena Ixcot (23), Phyllis Light (24), O. Phelps Brown (27), John Scudder (26), William Coles (27), John William Fyfe, Eva Graf (34–36), Anthony Godfrey, Louise Tenney (3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45), William T. Fernie (41, 46, 48), Lydia Child (12, 17, 42, 43), Agrippa von Nettesheim (47), George Slack (48).

Salvia rubrum. Red Sage.

The English herbalists use red sage somewhat differently from ordinary sage. Richard Hool (quoted by William Webb, 1916, 217) writes, “It is useful for fevers of every kind, measles, sore throat, quinsy, laryngitis, diphtheria; obstructed menstruation (amenorrhea), flooding (menorrhagia); colds, coughs, bronchitis, and inflammation of the lungs; constipation, indigestion, biliousness and liver complaints. Red sage is the single remedy we know for quinsy, diphtheria, and laryngitis. The infusion of one ounce to a pint of boiling water can be used in these conditions both as a medicine and as a gargle. The dose, internally, is from one wineglassful to half a tea cupful as often as required, or according to the severity of the case to be treated.

“It is used as a poultice for sore breasts or other inflamed gatherings. It allays nervous excitement, and is considered a useful medicine in typhoid fever given in small and frequently repeated doses. A cup of the strong infusion is good to relieve nervous headache, and when it is inveterate combine with wood betony and add a few drops of tincture avena if available.”

Sambucus nigra, S. canadensis. Elder.

Sambucus nigra *is the black elder native to Europe, whereas* S. canadensis *is the black-berried elder native to North America. They can be used interchangeably, though the Old World species possesses a more subtle flavor and yields the better wine*. S. racemosa, *commonly found in North America, should not be used. Elder is one of the two or three primal remedies of the European tradition. Charlemagne (c. 800 CE) decreed that an elder be planted in every yard in his realm, to be a "medicine cabinet" ready for immediate use. Thus it became a staple of peasant medicine in Europe. Elder was perfectly suited to humoral medicine since it opens all the channels—causing diaphoresis, emesis, purgation, diuresis, expectoration, and menstruation—also building and detoxifying the blood*.

Elder was sometimes called the "Hylde Moer" or "Elder Mother." It was said that the "Little Elder Mother" dwells in the tree, or her dominion can be entered through the tree. The Elder Mother is the "Queen of the Underworld" (a different dimension associated with the earth) or "Faery." Thus, it is considered perilous to fall asleep under an elder tree, and cradles were never to be made from its wood, because kidnapping human souls is a faery sport. The result is a "changeling," what we would now call an autistic child.

It was believed that Christ was crucified on elder wood. After his death he went down into the Underworld. Judas was believed to have hung himself on an elder tree. I have been informed that elder does grow all

about the temple mount in Jerusalem, a city as close to the Underworld, perhaps, as it is to God.

In Iceland, where the faeries are still taken very seriously, they are known as the "huldafolk," meaning "hidden people." Thus, the name elder is derived from hulda, *not* eld *(fire), as given in most sources* (cf. Grieve, 1931). *The name* Sambucus, *on the other hand, comes from the* sambuka, *or pan-pipes made from its hollow stems. It is said that the most haunting music is made from elder wood. So the tree is also associated with Pan, the Lord of the Underworld.*

The North American Indians placed offerings by each plant when picking them for use, whereas the medieval European peasants addressed the entire green world each spring by placing offerings to the Little Elder Mother at the foot of the elder in hopes of good medicine and crops. Later, at the feast of the Assumption of Mary (August 15), the herbs were blessed by the priest and the Queen of Heaven. Today people take it for granted that they can use natural resources without showing gratitude.

All parts of the elder are used in different ways, though the flowers and berries can be used to represent all the major uses in a slow-acting, safe presentation. The berries contain flavonoids, cyanogens, and some volatile oils. The flowers contain volatile oils of a buttery nature (due to the presence of fatty acids), coumarins, bitters, flavonoids, sterols, mucilage, and tannins (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 449, 447). *Thus, elder flower is cooling, immune-building, slightly blood-thinning, soothing, mildly stimulating (but not very warming), and slightly tonic (alterative and astringent). The numerous components almost justify the ancient idea that elder can do anything. Elder is a member of the honeysuckle family, which includes several cooling agents* (Lonicera, Viburnum trilobum).

Elder flowers, used fresh, are a stimulating diaphoretic, bringing the blood to the surface, strengthening the periphery, and bringing forth a sweat in pale, bluish persons with weak peripheral circulation. The dried flowers are more active as a sedative diaphoretic, reducing heat, opening the pores, and dispersing the blood in people

with dry, irritable, red skin of the cheeks of the face and “cheeky” parts of the body. There are tendencies to fever and eczema from the closed pores. Both actions—stimulating and sedative—are present together and therefore this plant has a normalizing action.

Sambucus is constitutionally indicated in persons with dry, red, irritable skin of the cheeks with a blue cast across the nose or by the eyes, or prominent blue veins or blue, swollen edema. In newborn infants when the skin is dry, closed, red, and irritated and there is a blue swelling across the root of the nose. Another indication is full, slightly puffy skin, mottled red, blue, and white, especially visible on the arms and legs. Elder opens all the tubes of the body (skin, lungs, colon, kidneys, blood vessels), improving oxygenation, blood flow, perspiration, and elimination by the colon and kidneys (indications from acupuncturist Chris Hafner).

Elder is relaxant, removing spasmodic cough, spasm in the stomach, and intestinal colic. It is an excellent remedy for croup and spasmodic coughing in children with the appropriate complexion. The child wakes in the night, can’t breath, turns blue, or lies awake at night with the croup. It is remedial for convulsions and epilepsy. The leaves are used fresh or dried externally on a boil to disperse heat and regulate blood flow. The young leaves have antifungal properties (external use).

The bark was used to make an emetic drink. A large draught was taken all at once. Taken slowly, it acts through the lymph, colon, and kidneys, causing movement of fluids, loosening of the stool, and urination. In the old sources, such as Nicholas Culpeper, it is said that elder bark cut away upward is emetic; scraped downward is cathartic. Generally, these uses are more heroic and it is better to get the colon and kidneys working by taking a preparation of the flowers over a longer period than a large draught of the semi-toxic bark.

The berries have much the same properties as the flowers, but they are also considered to be tonic and blood-building. Hence, they are used in anemia. “The juice of the berries, boiled down with a little sugar, or by some wholly without; and this, when it comes to the consistence of honey, is the famous *rob of elder*, good in colds

and sore throats" (John Hill, 1740, 165). In large doses, this juice is purgative (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 450).

Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 140) reports that elder sticks can be used to make lightweight splints for broken bones. This is an old gypsy remedy, still in use "on sheep farms in the West Country." She gives an extensive account of the advantages of this method.

Elder was so widely used at one time that Dr. Martin Blochwitz, of Haina, wrote a book, *Anatomia Sambuci* (1629), entirely about the folk and professional uses of the little tree. It remained in print in various translations, including the English, as late as 1675. Extracts from the original text are quoted by me in *The Book of Herbal Wisdom*.

Modern research has shown that elderberry kills many kinds of influenzal viruses and is effective in shortening bouts of influenza.

TASTE:

(dry flowers) sweet, sour, slightly acrid • moist, cool • sedative, stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

(dry flowers) irritation, constriction, depression
(berries) irritation, constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- *The great infant remedy; for infants with blue, pale swelling across the nose, red, dry, irritated skin of the cheeks; "opens the tubes and pores," lubricates the skin, improved respiration, digestion, and kidney function.*
- Children with marbling of the skin and respiratory problems; croup, ears full, respiratory problems, skin problems, eczema.

- Full bodied persons, especially women, with red-blue marbling of the flesh on the arms and legs; with colic, water retention under the skin, lower back pain.
- Old persons with edema; blue, swollen ankles.
- *Conditions where there are both stagnant fluids and blood, hence, pale, blue swelling; or where the skin is dry, harsh, red*.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Children with strong, sanguine personalities, who pay little attention to directions, "poorly socialized," classified as hyperactive.

RESPIRATION

- Congestion of the respiratory tract with restriction of breathing.
- Upper respiratory system, postnasal drip, allergic shiners under eyes.
- Wakes at night, can't breath, turns blue.

DIGESTION

- Intestinal colic and constipation.

LYMPH/IMMUNE

- Swollen spleen (berries).

CARDIOVASCULAR AND BLOOD

- Anemia (berries).
- Hemangioma (cf. *Salvia, Aesculus hippocastanum, Plantago*).

FEMALE

- Menstruation problems; fibroids.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Dropsy following scarlet fever and other eruptive fevers.

SKIN

- *Tissues full, flabby, as if containing water*.
- *Diseases of the skin, when the tissues seem full; epidermis separates and there is abundant serous discharge that forms crusts* (weeping eczema).
- *Indolent ulcers*.
- Eczema; skin harsh, dry, red.
- Tinea, ringworm, rashes, scabies (young leaves).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Sprained wrists and ankles; blue and swollen.
- Tight tendons.

FEVER

- Fever; harsh, dry, red, irritated skin; of cheeks, arms.
- Influenza, achy feeling.
- West Nile virus (a cup of elderberry wine, 3x/day).
- Immunity in winter; to improve (6 berries in water, once a day, in the fall).

EXTERNAL

- Poison ivy, poison oak (*Sambucus nigra*, Bastyr).

PREPARATION, TOXICITY, AND DOSAGE:

Black elder *(Sambucus nigra)* and Canadian elder *(Sambucus canadensis)* can be used interchangeably. Red elder *(Sambucus racemosa)* grows on uplands in North America, flowers in the spring, and produces red berries. All the elders are somewhat toxic (large doses are cathartic) but the last variety has actually killed children making blow guns from the stalks and should not be used in herbal medicine. Many parts of elder have been used, but the flowers are safest, best tasting, and reflect the overall properties of the plant well. They are collected in midsummer *(Sambucus canadensis)* and

dried for use as an infusion or extracted in alcohol or used fresh. The berries are also good tasting and commonly used in herbal commerce. An infused tea of elder flower (sometimes with lime flowers) is used in fever (Bisset and Wichtl). Dose of the tincture: 10–20 drops in 4 ounces of water (Rolla Thomas).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Martin Blochwitz (*Anatomia Sambuci*, 1629), Samuel Hahnemann (homeopathic provings: 9), Chris Hafner (1, 4, 5), Julia Graves (1-confirmed, 12), Aviva Romm (8), Kim Dudley (13), Dorothy Hall (10), Matthew Wood (1-confirmed, 2, 3, 5-confirmed, 6, 21–23, 25: reported from rural Minnesota), Jennifer Tucker (26), Rolla Thomas (16, 17, 18), John Bastyr (27).

Sanguisorba officinalis. Salad Burnet.

Salad burnet, a member of the rose family, has a dainty and beautiful flower. The leaf tastes like cucumber and is somewhat astringent. It is used primarily as an astringent on mucosa of the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and genitourinary tract, in gum disease, diarrhea, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, hemorrhoids, excess menstrual bleeding, and erosion of the cervix. Also used externally on wounds. Research shows that the root contains tannins, flavonoids, saponins, and volatile oils. Neil (1998, 31) recommends the wild over the garden variety in efficacy.

Sanicula europaea. Sanicle.

This common European wildflower vies for consideration as one of the most important but completely forgotten woundworts of the Middle Ages, as Peter Holmes would amusingly express the situation. It is a member of the Apiaceae family. Sanicula *contains bitters, saponins, tannins, volatile oils, calcium, silica, and allantoin. Since it does not grow in my area I*

must rely upon the European authors for information about its healing properties. Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff (1982, 336) compare it to arnica as a general woundwort. Richard Hool (William Webb, 1916, 212) compares it to coltsfoot, comfrey, marshmallow, and mullein, so he thinks of it more as a mucilage or emollient.

"The sanicle is popularly employed in Germany and France as a remedy for profuse bleeding from the lungs, bowels, womb, and urinary organs; also for the staying of dysenteric diarrhea. The fresh juice of the herb may be given in tablespoonful doses" (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 467). Its healing property extends into the inner body, where it acts on the viscera or more vegetative functions, and less on the nervous system, so much the focus in other umbelliferae. "In cases of diseases of the chest and lungs, spitting of blood, scrofula, ulcers and tumors, or internal abscesses and ulcerations, there is no plant superior to wood sanicle. It is useful in sore or ulcerated mouth and throat" (Hool, quoted by Webb, 1916, 212). Hool combines it with marshmallow and mullein for ulceration of the lungs or stomach.

"In injuries to the physical body, it shows the etheric body [vegetative, cellular processes] the right paths by which it can counteract the inflammation and the chaotic tendency of the blood process with its formative forces" (Husemann and Wolff, 1982, 337).

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Inflammation of mucus surfaces.
- Aphthous ulcers (canker sores), tonsillitis, gingivitis.
- Catarrhal conditions of the respiratory tract; cough, chronic bronchitis, spitting blood, pneumonia, tuberculosis.
- Gastroenteritis, ulcers, inflammation, diarrhea, dysentery, hemorrhoids, flatulence.
- Metritis, menorrhagia, vaginal discharge.
- Intermittent fevers.

- Skin ulcers, burns, cuts, wounds.
- Varicose veins.
- Bruises.
- Erysipelas, rashes.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

"Used alone, one ounce of the dried herb or root, simmered in 1 1/2 pints of water down to one pint, and strained, can be taken in wineglassful doses four or five times a day as a general strengthener of the bronchial tubes and lungs" (Hool).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff, Richard Hool, W. T. Fernie.

Saponaria officinalis. Soapwort.

This common native of Europe, widely naturalized in temperate regions, is a member of the clove family. It contains high levels of saponins and like other such plants it is used as an expectorant to remove catarrh from the upper respiratory tract. Traditionally, it was also used for skin conditions, rheumatism, and urinary tract problems (Bisset and Wichtl, 1994, 453).

Satureja hortensis. Summer Savory.

"There be two kinds of Savorie, the one that endureth winter & is of long continuance: the other is an annual or yearly plant, that perisheth at the time when it hath perfected his seede, and must be sowen againe the next yeare, which we call Sommer Savorie, or Savorie of a year" (John Gerard, 1633). The savories are small mints used in European medicine. They are warm and relaxing for the respiratory and gastrointestinal

tracts. They have a long history of use in colds, respiratory infections, bronchitis, asthma, gastritis, and colic of the stomach and intestines. They contain volatile oils (including thymol) and some tannins. Although very similar, they are not entirely interchangeable. Summer savory is more sweet and less hot, whereas winter savory is more hot and drying.

John Gerard (1633) writes, "Sommer Savorie is not full so hot as Winter Savorie, and therefore saith Dioscorides, more fit to be used in medicine: it maketh thin, and doth marvellously prevail against winde: therefore it is with good success boiled and eaten with beanes, eason, and other windie pulses, yea if it be applied to the belly in fomentation, it foorthwith helpth the mother, proceeding of winde"—that is, uterine cramping.

Summer savory is used as a warming and nourishing stimulant for conditions of asthenia, with deficiency of the endocrine, adrenocortical, and sympathetic systems. It is a stimulant to the cerebral cortex (useful in dementia), to the adrenal cortex, the ovaries and testicles (tardy development, sterility, impotence, frigidity), and "one of the strongest essences for building up a weak immune system" (Dan Kenner and Yves Requena, 2001, 235).

TASTE:

pungent and sweet

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy, tension

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Asthenia.
- Retarded development.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Dementia.

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory infections.
- Bronchitis.
- Asthma.

DIGESTION

- Chronic gastritis.
- Spasm of stomach and intestines.
- Chronic diarrhea.
- Chronic colitis.

SEXUAL SYSTEM

- Stimulates the testicles and ovaries; sterility, impotence, frigidity, developmental retardation.

OTHER

- Mycosis, “most types.”

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (1–12).

Satureja montana. Winter Savory.

“Winter Savory will grow either from seed or slips. It is a woodier and more bushy plant than the Summer Savory, and flowers contentedly among the stones of a rockery. Thus have I seen it in the Old Physic Garden, Chelsea. Gardeners still have faith in the virtue of its leaves and sprigs to cure wasp and bee stings” (Frances A. Bardswell, The Herb Garden, *1911, quoted by W. T. Fernie, 1914)*.

John Gerard (1633) writes, “Winter Savorie is of temperature hot and drie in the third degree, it maketh thinne, cureth and clenseth the passages, to be brief, it is altogether of like vertu with Time.” It is more pungent and hot, whereas summer savory is sweeter, and therefore more nutritive. Because it is hot and dry in the third degree, winter savory is used to warm up the interior to drive impurities to the surface, thin fluids and toxins to drive them out, and open the pores to remove them. It is applicable in cold, moist conditions where there may even be putrefaction. Thus, it is indeed much like thyme.

TASTE:

pungent and astringent

TISSUE STATES:

depression, relaxation

LITERATURE:

Traditional, John Gerard, Frances A. Bardswell.

Silybum marianum, Carduus marianus. Milk Thistle, St. Mary’s Thistle.

The older literature uses the name Carduus marianus. *This is still preferred in homeopathy and has recently been resuscitated in botanical literature as well. Milk thistle has a long history of use in European folk medicine. It was used for a hot, swollen liver or spleen, jaundice, respiratory problems associated with a congested liver, to break and expel kidney stones, increase urination, dispel dropsy, and cleanse the blood.*

After a period of obscurity the use of milk thistle was revived in the early nineteenth century by Dr. J. G. Rademacher. He was the first to determine that the active ingredients were found in the seed coat. His work was translated into English and his indications were enlarged upon in the late nineteenth century by J. Compton Burnett. Dr. Windelband of Berlin recorded 145 out of 190 cases of varicose veins cured by its use. This application was further developed by the American eclectics.

In the twentieth century the active ingredients of Silybum *were analyzed and it was found to contain antidotes to powerful hepatotoxins. It is a specific in the liver damaged by poisons such as* Amanita verna, A. phalloides, *or alcoholism. It has been reintroduced through modern phytotherapy. However, we must turn to the older literature for the specific indications and a sense of the context within which it best operates*.

The sweet, oily seed indicates that milk thistle will be suited to dry cases, which is indeed what we find. Dry skin, hard, swollen, knotty veins, and constipation with dry, hard stool are often present. An excellent account of the traditional uses of milk thistle is given by Yadubir Sinha, an Indian homeopath who uses herbal mother tinctures. "*Carduus* acts principally on the liver. It is beneficial in hepatic congestion due to cold or alcoholic drinks. When the action of the liver is sluggish, the secretion of bile is insufficient and causes jaundice, the bowels constipation, motion clay coloured and the tongue foul with a feeling of languor and general debility. It works like a magic in cirrhosis of the liver due to alcoholic habits and cures all the complaints dependent on it, viz.: gastric derangements, vomiting of blood, jaundice, scanty urination, dropsy, etc. It removes all ailments such as torpidity and induration of liver, gall stone colic, inflammation of the hepatic region. In any disease if constipation is prominent, give *Carduus* 1 [first homeopathic dilution, 10% of mother tincture] in one drop doses intercurrently with the indicated remedy. It will give tone to the liver, remove constipation and aid in rapid cure of the case.

"*Carduus* exerts a curative action also on the spleen, in conditions similar to those of the liver. The diseases of the two organs are concurrent. In such cases *Carduus* should be alternated with *Ceanothus Americanus* 1 [mother tincture]." Both these organs are much dependent on the portal vein and the venous circulation in general. This remedy acts strongly on enlarged and hardened varicose veins. The eclectics speak of the arteries as being ropey. "Chronic congestion and cirrhosis of liver give rise to piles. In these conditions *Carduus* should be administered."

Rademacher first discovered the utility of *Carduus* in cases where there was serious lung disease adjacent to serious liver disease—probably abscesses on the liver discharging through a fistula into the lungs—a condition seen before the advent of antibiotics.

"Dr. Ambers advocates for the use of *Chelidonium* 1 and Dr. Birjosky lays stress on the use of *Carduus* 1 in gall-stone colic and affirms that constant use of *Carduus* prevents recurrence of gall-stone colic and formation of bile-stones and thereby cures gall-stone colic permanently."

TASTE:

sweet • oily

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Dull, heavy head, despondency, with coated tongue, lack of appetite, nausea.
- Asthma.
- Purulent discharge from the lungs, with adjacent swollen liver.
- Liver swollen, sore, painful; jaundice.

- Liver damage from alcoholism, especially beer.
- Influenza with liver complications; sudden onset, chills, diarrhea (cf. *Cnicus*).
- *Specific antidote to poisoning with* Amanita verna *and related mushrooms*.
- Gallbladder swollen, painful; gallstone colic.
- Edema associated with liver and kidney problems.
- Constipation; stool hard, knotty, difficult to expel, black, hard, like balls, in knots, like clay, without bilious coloring.
- Hemorrhoids, bleeding, burning.
- Varicose veins, hard, rope-like.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Tincture, fluid extract. In emergency (mushroom poisoning) give continually in small amounts. It acts incredibly quickly. In chronic cases "give it for a long time as it acts slowly," 2–5 drops, 3–4x/day (Petersen, 1905, 69).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, J. G. Rademacher (3), J. Compton Burnett, Finley Ellingwood, Rudolf Weiss, Yadubir Sinha.

Solidago canadensis, S. virga-aurea. Goldenrod.

Goldenrod is an extremely widespread and common plant in the northern hemisphere. The New World contains somewhere between forty and sixty species, depending on who is doing the counting, whereas Europe is home to a single native species, Solidago virga-aurea. *The ubiquitous American representatives have now spread to Europe. Of the latter, the common* Solidago canadensis *is considered to be the officinal medicine. The European native is preferred in Europe. Most goldenrods seem to be*

interchangeable. Goldenrod contains flavonoids (including quercetin and rutin), tannins, triterpene saponins, bitters, and essential oils.

The root, leaf, and flower of the *Solidago* is predominately bitter and pungent, leading to the traditional use as a carminative to stimulate secretions from the stomach. The flavonoids make it cooling as well as stimulating or warming, so it has been used on infected wounds that need to be simultaneously cooled off and stimulated. The aromatic essential oils carry it into the respiratory sphere, where it is used for allergies or old, stuck cases after influenza has left a low-grade bronchial infection. It is particularly important as a kidney remedy, stimulating the kidneys to greater activity following stressful illnesses or even psychological stress. It acts somewhat like an alterative on the skin and scalp, a specific indication being scabs and sores on the scalp and legs. Due to the affinity to the kidneys it has a greater association with the legs—edema, skin sores—than the upper body. There is some history of use as a female medicine, both in Europe and North America, but these indications have not been fully developed.

"This herb is a very old and good kidney medicine," commented Dr. J. G. Rademacher in the early nineteenth century. It was likewise used as a kidney remedy in North America. Rademacher used it in persons who were recovering from illness when the urine turned dark, exhaustion set in, and it was evident that the kidneys could not process the waste products from the disease. A similar picture is painted by our twentieth-century folk herbalist, Maria Treben. She relates how the kidneys help us work out our emotions and if they become exhausted they slow down, the back and feet are tired, and the urinary output is altered. This theme is further developed by Dr. John H. Clarke (1903), a homeopath—the uses are the same in homeopathy and herbalism. "The grand keynote of this remedy lies in *the condition and the action of the kidneys and the quality of their secretions*. Diseases arising from or complicated with defective action of the kidneys are very likely to be benefited by *Solid*. Pain and tenderness in kidney region; pains extending from

kidneys to abdomen, bladder, and down limbs; urine dark, red-brown, scanty, thick, voided with difficulty; albumins, mucous, and phosphatic urine." It helps the body excrete larger protein particles (7Song).

The exhausted kidneys of *Solidago* can go either way, toward a dry, irritable skin with dark, scanty urine (Matthew Wood) or toward swelling with copious, light urine (William LeSassier). Very often the skin on the legs is dry and scaly, with scattered scabs and crusts. The scalp is likewise affected. Goldenrod opens the pores of the skin on the legs and scalp, sometimes even inducing a temporary perspiration when first used.

Solidago is bitter, warm, and pungent, a combination ideally suited for use as a carminative—that is, for stimulating and increasing digestion. William LeSassier recommended it as a carminative tonic for a "cold stomach," especially in the winter.

Goldenrod has produced and cured conjunctivitis. The symptoms are well described by William Boericke. It is indicated for reddened, glistening conjunctiva that look like the person had just stepped out of chlorinated water. It is excellent for many kinds of allergies where these symptoms appear—usually also with the "tired kidneys" and tired feet. It is a superlative remedy for cat allergy, either in small herbal or low homeopathic doses (Matthew Wood).

TASTE:

(leaf) bitter, pungent

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, torpor, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Tired, worn out, can't process the issues of life, feet tired; "Where's the nearest chair?"
- Allergies; conjunctiva red, glazed; eyes watering, nose itching; specific for cat allergies.
- Acne in sheets of small pimples on the face.
- Enlarged, wet, boggy tongue.
- "Cold stomach," inactive digestion, flatulence after the meal.
- Urine dark, scanty; or clear, copious.
- Dry, scaly skin, or edema and swelling.
- Old purulent conditions of the lungs, mucosa, and skin.
- Exhausted, tired lower back, tired feet, exhausted kidneys.
- After acute disease clears, when the urine gets dark and scanty, the kidneys are exhausted and incapable of completing the cure.
- Bladder irritation, early stages, with bacterial infection, sweat.
- Edema of the legs with sores and purulence.
- Dry, scaly patches on the scalp and legs.
- Old, inflamed, purulent, gangrenous wounds.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The roots, leaves, and flowers have all been used. The leaves are harvested before flowering. They are preferred as a stomach tonic. The flowers are harvested in the fall and extracted fresh in alcohol for use in respiratory and renal conditions. Dose: 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day for allergies. Larger doses can be used but can cause conjunctivitis. *Solidago virga-aurea* is officinal in Europe; *S. canadensis* in North America.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, homeopathic (William Boericke, J. H. Clarke), J. G. Rademacher (10), Maria Treben (1), Matthew Wood (1–3, 13), William LeSassier (4, 5, 11).

Spiraea ulmaria. Meadowsweet.

Refer to the entry under the modern name, *Filipendula ulmaria*.

Stachys officinalis. Wood Betony.

Refer to the entry under the old name, *Betonica officinalis*.

Stachys palustris. Woundwort.

Woundwort is a rather coarse, ill-smelling mint that is native to roadsides and edges of fields near low ground. Native to Europe, it is naturalized in North America and utilized by the Indian people. Its introduction into medicine comes rather late and it is still not widely used—but it lives up to its name.

Members of this family had an ancient reputation as wound medicines, hence the common name. The fixation of this species as the officinal woundwort owes to a curious coincidence. John Gerard, a famous London surgeon and the author of *The Great Herbal* (1633), recounts how he was traveling to Kent to visit a friend when he happened upon a farm laborer who had a huge gash in his arm that was bleeding profusely. He had been cutting hay in a field with a scythe. Gerard offered to help, explaining that he was a surgeon from London. The country fellow immediately took a dislike to the city gentleman and proclaimed that he knew a better remedy and didn't need the help of any high and mighty London surgeon. He went over to the edge of the field, grabbed some of this obscure plant, and put it on the cut. Gerard, who was already shocked by the display of bad manners, was even more shocked to see the bleeding stop almost immediately. Even the best medicine of the received tradition could not rival what he saw. Humbled, he inquired after the plant and was shown *Stachys palustris*. Up to that time this plant was simply known as a woundwort, but Gerard, to

commemorate the event, named it “clown’s woundwort.” He thought the farm laborer was a clown for refusing help and being rude about it, but it is perhaps possible that the name could describe a famous surgeon who was quite full of himself. Experimentation showed that clown’s woundwort was far better than the standard medicine, made from lemon balm. Gerard gives several case histories where it healed quickly, including one where the trachea had been severed.

Stellaria media. Chickweed.

Chickweed is native to moist, shady spots in yards and woods, often around the bottoms of trees. It is mild in flavor and is used as a mild salad green to counter the bitterness of other spring greens. In addition, it has long been utilized in folk medicine. It is one of those very simple and ubiquitous plants that can be applied to many conditions.

This innocuous little plant proves once again that Nature’s pharmacopoeia need not be poisonous and is always common and close at hand. In the most simple things we find the greatest virtue. Jethro Kloss writes: “It heals and soothes anything it comes in contact with.”

The properties of chickweed are so numerous that they are hard to define, but we may start with the observation that this moist, cool, shade-loving little green denizen is lubricating, nourishing, cooling, and antifebrile. William LeSassier said it is “first and foremost a nutritive.” It helps to assimilate nutrients. Chickens love it and it makes them very healthy, he observed. “As a poultice it can’t be beat.” It is applied externally on boils, rashes, outbreaks, and eczema for its cooling and cleansing properties. It is a cooling diuretic so it is beneficial in “any form of internal inflammation” (Kloss).

Chickweed not only subdues heat and lubricates dry conditions, but also regulates water levels and drives off excess dampness and

fats. These actions show that it stimulates both sides of the metabolism, building and breaking down, not only through the liver but also through the endocrine system. Thus, it is used to lose weight, not just short-term water weight, but long-term deposits of fats. It is an outstanding remedy for lipomas (fatty tumors), as well as general weight loss—facts to which I can attest from personal experience. At the same time, chickweed acts deeply on the waters of the body, decongesting the lymphatics and clearing waters through the kidneys, driving off local pockets of water in the lungs or elsewhere, but also preserving and balancing the water levels in the body. In short, there is no area in the "alterative category" (liver, lymphatics, endocrine, kidneys, skin, intestines, lungs) it does not touch.

Because of this wide range of application, it is difficult to define specific indications, though the presence of lipoma and excess fat is always a good indication. Water regulation is another key, as Rosemary Gladstar pointed out in a lecture. "Chickweed is very powerful. It cures through nourishment, especially helping the kidneys to regulate water. People with kidney problems need a lot of emotional support and help. The hairiness on the leaves indicates that it preserves water."

TASTE:

moist, cool

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Thin, malnourished, weedy constitution.

- Overweight, *hypothyroidism*, poor lipid metabolism, high cholesterol, arteriosclerosis.
- Sore eyes (poultice).
- Deafness.
- Ulcerated, inflamed throat and mouth.
- Bronchitis, pleurisy, coughs, colds, hoarseness, asthma.
- Excessive appetite.
- Inflammation or weakness of the stomach and bowels; colitis, diarrhea.
- Constipation, complete obstruction.
- Hemorrhoids.
- Peritonitis (cf. *Eupatorium maculatum*).
- Lactation: mastitis (internal and external).
- Swollen testis (poultice).
- Cellulite.
- Rheumatism, arthritis.
- External application on inflamed surfaces; scalds, burns, boils, abscesses, skin diseases, rashes, eczema, itching, erysipelas, burning and itching genitals, wounds.
- *Lipomas, fatty tumors, watery deposits*.
- Blood poisoning (internal and external).
- Itching skin (salve).
- Drawing agent for foreign bodies in the skin, with infection and pus formation (salve).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Dried or fresh, the leaves are prepared by infusion or decoction. Steep a heaping teaspoonful in just-boiled water for half an hour. For constipation, boil 3 heaping tablespoonfuls of the fresh herb in a quart of water, until a pint is left; take a cupful warm every 3 hours or more often (Kloss). Bathe the surface with the decoction or poultice; follow with a salve. External application may need to be persistent, for as long as six months, to bring about a cure (Richard Hool, 1922). The tincture is as good as the tea (Rosemary Gladstar).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Jethro Kloss (9), Richard Hool (1), Rosemary Gladstar, Maude Grieve (2), Lise Wolff (17), Dorothy Hall (20).

Symphytum officinale. Comfrey.

Comfrey is one of the most famous of medicinal herbs, though a shadow has passed across its career in recent years. Discovery of the presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids has added a warning to its use. These agents can be hurtful to the liver. Hence, comfrey has been banned in some countries and considered dangerous in most of the rest. However, some strains and parts of the plant do not contain the culprit and external use is still entirely safe. Comfrey is a member of the borage family native to Europe. The medicinal ingredients include allantoin (a cell proliferant), alkaloids (CNS activity), mucilage, tannins, sterols, resins, volatile oils, gums, and triterpenes.

This old European folk remedy has been shown to possess a substance, allantoin, which causes cell growth, hence the explanation for some of its remarkable healing properties. Comfrey stimulates growth when the system has been traumatized and is, perhaps, having trouble regenerating on its own. It is excellent for delayed bone-healing, abrasions and injuries to the skin and mucosa, and as a general rejuvenative. In addition, it is mucilaginous, mildly astringent, and slightly bitter, suiting its use as a tonic on the surfaces of the body. It tones and heals injured skin and mucosa. It also is a drawing agent and will often draw stagnant or toxic material out of injured joints, muscles, and tendons. It probably increases movement of fluids into the joints (which lie just beyond the range of direct blood circulation), and is perhaps regenerative to cartilage and bone. It has long been used to heal broken bones and repair injured joints.

As an astringent mucilage comfrey has been used to correct erosive discharges from the intestines, in diarrhea and dysentery,

spitting of blood in tuberculosis, leucorrhea in weakly females, ardor of urine. The roots correct "salt sharp serum," comments Samuel Henry (1814, 81).

There are several problems with comfrey. The pyrrolizidine alkaloids may be dangerous for persons with weak liver function, though most of this is speculative. The leaves and roots are strongly mucilaginous and slimy, but the leaf is better tolerated by the body and contains less pyrrolizidine. Another problem, seldom mentioned in the literature, is that comfrey causes exuberant growth, even overgrowth, of tissue, so that it can cause a callus on a broken bone or callus the skin. It causes growth "from the top down," like goldenseal, rather than from the inside up, like yarrow, plantain, calendula, boneset, and St. John's wort. Hence it needs to be worked with carefully and not exuberantly. In two instances I am aware of it caused the lips of the vagina to grow together in infant girls on which it was used for diaper rash, requiring surgical intervention. In another case it caused a torn tissue to form a tough coating without bringing the lips of the wound together, requiring subsequent surgery. I have never seen it used (by itself) to heal bone without causing an overgrowth or callus, even after a few days. One of my apprentices was holding the plant in her left hand and a chopping knife in her right; the next day her left hand was calloused.

The following rather interesting material is from a lost source (but see symptom number 5 below, from Dorothy Hall). Comfrey flower essence is beneficial for head injuries. It helps to "repattern the brain." It is indicated in epilepsy, insomnia, long-standing rapid eye movement, and autism.

TASTE:

mucilaginous, slightly bitter, astringent • cold, damp

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Bloody discharges from weakened mucosa (lungs, intestines, bladder).
- Odd blood diseases; abnormal white cell production; leukemias in children, thalassemia.
- Delayed development and deformities.
- Delayed puberty.
- Brain injury, apparent death, no activity in brain (comfrey can revive).
- Alzheimer's.
- Gum disease.
- Allergies, hay fever, sinusitis.
- Chronic cough; bleeding from the lungs; pleurisy, pneumonia, asthma, *emphysema*, tuberculosis.
- Debilitated, chronic gastric mucosal irritation.
- Digestive inflammation, colitis, diarrhea, ulceration, bloody stool.
- Breast inflammation.
- Kidney stones.
- Repetitive use problems in joints, sprains, strains (poultice).
- Back keeps going out of joint (Eva Graf); *decreased bone density in the lower lumbar spine; chronic lumbosacral instability, where the vertebrae rotate out all the time, soreness of the fourth and fifth lumbar process* (Brent Davis).
- Severe spinal injury.
- Arthritis, bursitis (hot poultice).
- Muscle spasms (external).
- Rheumatoid arthritis; early onset.
- *Difficult reunion of broken bones; facilitates bone repair, nutrition, and strengthening*.
- Burns, bruises, cuts, boils, abscesses, bites (external).
- Develops calluses on fingers, palms, and soles; good for dancers, needle-workers, etc.
- Dark, horny skin; from retention of dead skin cells.

- Cancer following an injury at the site; especially in breasts, chest (10 drops, 4x/day; Yadubir Sinha).
- Psoriasis and eczema (green leaf tea, 1 quart a day).
- Leucorrhea.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Root and leaves.

CAUTIONS:

Contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids, which can cause liver damage. Leaves contain less. Use externally, in small doses, and when the liver is healthy.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Not to be used during a normal, healthy puberty (Dorothy Hall). Do not use to increase bone growth until the bones are set in the right place (Matthew Wood).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dorothy Hall (2–6, 16, 19), Eva and Eugene Graf (15, 25), Aviva Romm (18), Brent Davis (15), Yadubir Sinha (24), John Hill (26), Samuel Henry (26).

Tanacetum parthenium. Feverfew.

Refer to the entry under *Chrysanthemum parthenium*.

Tanacetum vulgare. Tansy.

Tansy is a member of the aster family native to Europe but widely naturalized in North America. It was once used as a bitter tonic at Easter, to cleanse the system. It is “a rather harsh remedy” (William Cook) that is not pleasant to use. I was once driving in the country with a girlfriend, picked a single shoot, put it on the dashboard for decoration, but immediately removed it when my companion starting having a severe uterine spasm. As soon as it was out the window she was back to normal. It has been used to bring on suppressed menstruation and even as an abortifacient, but it is both dangerous and inefficient in moderate doses. This remedy could perhaps be used in very small or homeopathic doses. The oil is used as a local stimulant on sprains, strains, and even torn tendons.

Taraxacum officinale. Dandelion.

Dandelion is, of course, an extremely common resident of the temperate regions, originally native to Europe and Asia. It was imported to North America as a spring green. Dandelion is a member of the Asteraceae or composite family. It contains flavonoids, polysaccharides, sesquiterpene lactones, triterpenes, sterols, carotenoids, and potassium (up to 4.5% in the leaves).

“This is the celebrated plant in which the common people of every land have faith,” wrote the nineteenth-century New Zealand herbalist James Neil (1998, 77). Dandelion has an old reputation as a “spring tonic” and “blood purifier.” The tradition of eating dandelion greens in the spring is a widespread European practice that, imported to the New World, has not yet completely died out. Although best known for its general properties as an alterative, dandelion also possesses virtues of a highly specific nature, though these more definite indications are not well known. It is indicated when heat descends deeply into the tissues, thickening fluids, slowing down drainage, inflaming the deeper tissues, and even infecting the bones. We find it of use occasionally in a severe acute

fever, but more often it is called for in cases that develop slowly; it is a remedy to cool excess heat and thin and disperse surplus fluids. (Note the case history given under “Cautions,” where it was too drying.)

The tongue provides a specific indication that leads to its effective use in these cases. Taraxacum is especially indicated where there is a *mapped* or *geographic tongue*. This indication comes to us from the homeopathic provings of Samuel Hahnemann and was further developed by some of the later homeopaths. “Tongue covered with a white film; feels raw; comes off in patches, leaving red, sensitive spots” (Boericke, 1927, 633). Sometimes the film is yellow, sometimes the mapping is at the top or at the bottom, and sometimes it is so burned off that only remnants remain around the edges. The color of the tongue body is just as significant. It is dark red, indicating a sort of deep, internally established heat, although there may be spots of intense red showing off local inflammation. Sometimes there is dark red in the lips too. At the same time they are usually somewhat dry. After giving dandelion the tongue will usually turn from dark red to pink red, indicating that the heat is coming up from the depths but that a sensitivity to heat remains.

If we understand the significance of the mapped tongue, we understand the process to which dandelion is remedial. This indication would be associated with “phlegm fire” in traditional Chinese medicine. The basic idea is that heat is baking down fluids while thickened fluids are blocking the outward escape of the heat. In practical terms, this means that dandelion is indicated when heat has settled in the deeper tissues (muscles, bones) and is simmering away. It is well indicated when there is decalcification from infection in the bone.

I recently recommended dandelion root with success in a young colt with mild laminitis (inflammation of the hooves) from eating too much grain. This shows the affinity to inflammation in the hard structures rather nicely. The vet considered this a mild case that would probably recover. I do not know if taraxacum could reverse a severe case, but the effect was quick in this colt.

Strangely, I have several times used dandelion root with success in manic-depression, when accompanied by a mapped tongue. Without this tongue indication I would never have suspected that it acted on such a condition. Here the mapped tongue indicates "phlegm fire obstructing the heart" in traditional Chinese medicine. That is to say, the condition is acting on the mind. One client proudly came up to the stage where I was speaking at a convention and showed me his tongue—cleared off, along with the manic-depression, after six months on dandelion root.

It should be noted that although I am using diagnostic indications from traditional Chinese herbalism to describe the properties of the Western dandelion, these indications have not been associated with Chinese dandelion per se. They are based on my own experience and the need to find words to properly express the properties of this plant. Chinese dandelion *(Taraxacum mongolicum, T. sinicum, T. heterolepis olepis)* is used rather similarly to Western dandelion. It is classified as bitter, sweet, and cold. It is used to reduce heat in the interior of the body, counteract toxicity, disperse swelling, heal carbuncles, stomachache, hepatitis, appendicitis, mastitis, urinary infections, head colds, tracheitis, laryngitis, and acute tonsillitis (Lu, 1994, 151).

The root is used more for the alterative effect, to thin the fluids and reduce heat. It is indicated in stagnant bile, where heat is baking down the bile and we get gallstones. It has long been used to slowly cleanse the liver, gallbladder, and pancreas. Michael Murray, ND (1995, 74), puts into words the feeling of many herbalists: "Dandelion is regarded as one of the finest liver remedies, both as food and medicine." Studies have shown "that dandelion enhances flow of bile, improving such conditions as liver congestion, bile duct inflammation, hepatitis, gallstones, and jaundice." The action is twofold: "It has a direct effect on the liver, causing an increase in bile production and flow to the gallbladder (a choleretic effect), and a direct effect on the gallbladder, causing contraction and release of stored bile (a cholagogue effect)." Dandelion has been used for some problems derived from liver and gallbladder stasis, such as high

cholesterol, excess urea, gout, constipation, portal stagnation, varicose veins, cellulitis, eczema, acne, and herpes.

The leaf has an earthen taste, so it increases diuresis. It is indicated in tiresome, achy, feverish, chronic infections with relief from urination. Because the leaves contain sodium and potassium they act on both sides of the kidney mechanism: excreting fluids and retaining specific contents. Hence, dandelion leaf is one of the few diuretics that retains potassium and builds up the retentive side of the kidneys. I recommended it to a woman in her fifties who was suffering from potassium loss due to long-term diarrhea—she had Crohn's disease with part of her intestine removed. The doctors gave her periodic shots of potassium or expensive potassium supplements, which she had neglected for a while. She was terribly fatigued, losing fluids via the stools and kidneys. Dandelion root stopped the condition quickly—the leaf might have been even better. As a diuretic, dandelion leaf can cause weight loss due to water removal.

Michael Moore (2003) recommends the pickled root for chronic inflammatory conditions. I'll have to try some of this, as that is the condition for which I use dandelion root the most. He specifically mentions skin conditions, wheezy lungs, colon congestion, and "leaky gut syndrome."

"Dandelion is the ideal spring cleanser, spring bitters, and spring tonic," wrote Dr. Swinburne Clymer (1933, II:41). "Its mineral contents are more evenly balanced for this purpose than any 'medicine' any chemist could invent. Perhaps, it is needless to say, it is a desirable and efficient food at any other time of the year." However, the leaf quickly turns bitter in summer. Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 57) recommends the mineral filled greens as a diet for strengthening the enamel of the teeth, and as a constitutional remedy for diabetes, obesity, and excessive sleepiness.

TASTE:

(root) bitter, sweet, earthen, salty • moist • oily

(leaf) bitter, earthen, salty • moist, cool

TISSUE STATE:

stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Dullness of the mind, lethargy, sleepiness, with congestion of fluids.
- Mania; insomnia; manic-depressive.

HEAD

- Swollen membranes around the sinuses, from chronic allergy and infection.
- *Mapped tongue*. Patches of opaque white coating torn off in places to expose a red, raw tongue body. Also suitable when all the coating has been exfoliated by heat, or when the coating is yellow, or there are only traces of the coat, or for a *dark, red tongue*.
- Mastoiditis; pain, swelling, or redness in the *sternocleidomastoid muscle (SCM; side of neck)*.
- Lips dark red, dry.

RESPIRATION

- Bronchitis.

DIGESTION

- Stomach, indigestion, gas.

LIVER

- Liver congested, swollen, gallbladder congested, bile thick, adhesive, gallstone formation, lack of bile secretion, jaundice

from backed-up bile, constipation from lack of bile in the intestines; anemia from lack of bile production and recycling.

CARDIOVASCULAR AND BLOOD

- High cholesterol, high blood pressure; one of the best remedies for *cardiorenal edema*.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Diabetes type II, hypoglycemia.
- Edema, stones, chronic kidney infection.
- Swollen, achy feeling in kidney region, feels better after urination.

FEMALE

- Breast congestion, hardness, mastitis; cancer.
- PMS.
- Menopausal problems from poor liver function; liver not breaking down extra hormones.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Muscular pain, swelling, heat; especially in the sternocleidomastoid muscle and neck*.
- Inflammation of the muscles; muscles tight and swollen; SCM involved; chronic rheumatism.
- Infections in bones.
- Rheumatoid arthritis, with deformation of the fingers.

SKIN

- Acne, abscesses, boils, eczema, herpes, age spots.

FEVER

- Acute fever with high temperature, dark red tongue or patch of dark red on the tongue.

CONSTITUTION

- Tall, thin, emaciated.
- Overweight, sluggish, sleepy.
- Many kinds of people.
- Anger; “male clients who are hard-driving and over-striving” (Kimberly Galvin).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Effective in small, medium, or large doses. Leaves are more diuretic, roots are more cholagogue, the flower acts more on the heart. Dandelion harmonizes a formula (LeSassier).

CAUTIONS:

Dandelion leaf and root have long been used as foods and both are generally regarded as safe. However, I had a cardiac case where I gave marshmallow root and dandelion root (separately) as diuretics. The eighty-two-year-old man reacted excellently to the former and adversely to the latter. “It dried out my mouth, made my digestion bad, made me urinate five times a night.” Moistening his mouth was one thing we were trying to accomplish with the marshmallow root, since he was dry. Fortunately marshmallow root lived up to its reputation as the most mucilaginous of the diuretics.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (7–12, 15–16, 21–22), homeopathic provings and clinical experience (4, 5, 13, 17–18, 22), Matthew Wood (1–7, 17–19, 22, 25), traditional Chinese medicine (14), C. F. Leyel (20), Rudolf Weiss (20), Julia Graves (23), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (18, 21), Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1, 24).

Thymus vulgaris, T. serpyllum. Thyme.

Thyme is an ancient Mediterranean remedy, still used in commercial products as an antiseptic and in modern European medicine as a specific for whooping cough. The name thymos *comes from the Greek word for "strength." It is a very strong remedy, deeply dredging the system, opening it up so that heat and toxins can be removed (cf.* Hyssopus, Larrea*) and thinning phlegm. It contains volatile oils, including thymol, carvacrol, borneol, and others.*

Thyme is suited to cold, inactive conditions where there are tendencies to chills, shivering, putrefaction, sepsis, and stagnant, stuck mucus. It has proved effective against very serious infective organisms such as anthrax, typhoid, and diphtheria (cf. *Olea*). It is too seldom appreciated today as a deep and powerful detoxifier. It has a powerful penetrative effect, due to the volatile oils, which open pores, thin mucus, and move fluids through the tissues. It is "hot in the third degree" by the standards of Greek medicine, and thymol is "hot in the fourth degree" (burns the skin). Like most members of the mint family, thyme has a relaxant effect on the nerves.

Herbalist Matthew Becker has developed a constitutional profile for thyme. It is suited to people with deep unconscious issues that disturb the sleep. The mind may be preoccupied, but the problems come up from below consciousness. This fits the physical profile for thyme, since it is a remedy for toxins and closed passageways deep in the body. It also fits the findings of modern European medicine (Dan Kenner and Yves Requena, 2001, 239), since thyme is considered a parasympathetic relaxant. Sleep and dreams occur when the parasympathetic is running the ship, so disturbed sleep and dreams indicate that this branch of the autonomic cannot fully relax. Thyme also stimulates the thymus gland, which improves immunity and self-identity, and the adrenal cortex.

As a parasympathetic relaxant, thyme naturally acts on the gastrointestinal tract and is remedial for dyspepsia and sluggish digestion. It is an old carminative used to warm up the stomach. This is commonly the case with remedies hot in the third degree. It is used to enhance digestion and nutrition in convalescence (King, quoted by Hoffmann, 2003, 569).

TASTE:

pungent • hot, dry • stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

depression, constriction, atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Persons with low-level anxiety from subconscious sources, difficulty sleeping.*
- Persons with *low vitality, chilliness, frequent, recurrent infections* and cold limbs.
- Heat affecting the nervous system: *nightmares, restlessness, lethargy, spasm.*
- *People who wake with fright or startled; wake with phlegm in the throat.*
- Paralysis, epilepsy, fainting.
- Alcoholism.

HEAD

- Headache, hangover.

RESPIRATION

- Laryngitis, sore throat, tonsillitis.
- *Constant clearing of the throat; postnasal drip*.
- Acute colds with shivering.
- Acute and chronic bronchitis.
- Highly irritable mucosa causing constant coughing; unstoppable fits of coughing; in acute or chronic respiratory disease.
- *Whooping cough in children*.
- Shortness of breath, emphysema.
- Respiratory problems associated with worms.

- Respiratory mucus associated with emotions (cf. *Marrubium*).
- Wet coughs, spasmodic coughs, mucus yellow, green, thick.
- Pneumonia.
- Respiratory mycosis.

DIGESTION

- Poor appetite, slow digestion, food ferments, creates gas and burning in the stomach, heartburn; in cold, sluggish constitutions with putrefactive tendency.
- Colic, gas, cramps, diarrhea.
- Rectocolitis.
- Parasites.
- Typhoid fever.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Genitourinary complaints including bladder infections, yeast infections, thrush, putrid genital discharges.
- Childhood bedwetting and diarrhea.

FEMALE

- Amenorrhea.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Cold limbs.
- Gout, rheumatism.
- Skin of fingers dry (cf. *Crataegus*, back of wrists dry).
- Hookworm (thymol; 5–20 grains).

FEVER

- Fever with faulty perspiration, deep heat, chills, cold extremities, putrefaction.

SKIN

- Scabies, lice, crabs, athlete’s foot (external and internal).

- Boils, abscesses, surface infections, mastitis, bruises, shingles (external).

OTHER

- Leukopenia, low immunity, anemia.
- Spleen; damp, boggy.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Tincture of the fresh leaves captures the volatile oils best. Dose: 15–20 drops, 2–3x/day and once before bed (Matthew Becker). Lemon thyme can be substituted. It has a better taste and patients take it more readily.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Thyrotoxicosis (Husemann and Wolff). The oil is violently irritating to the skin.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Rudolf Weiss, Matthew Becker (1, 4, 9, 17), Dorothy Hall (8, 36), David Hoffmann (8, 11, 13, 26), Aviva Romm (16), Rose Elliot and Carlo de Paoli (2, 3), Eva Graf (15), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (8, 10–14, 18–24, 35), Matthew Wood (30), John William Fyfe (21, 24, 31).

Tilia europaea, T. cordata, T. platyphyllos, T. americana. Linden Flower, Basswood.

The European linden and the American basswood are beautiful trees that provide shade, easily worked wood, bark for basket making (hence the name bast wood), and medicine. Our medical tradition owes more to

Europe than North America. Hence, this remedy is frequently called by its European name, linden flower. The European species are officinal, but the American can be used in its place. Tilia *contains an interesting assortment of constituents including flavonoids, tannins, amino acids, mucilaginous polysaccharides, sterols, steroidal saponins, phenolic acids, and volatile oils.*

In the old days, according to Julia Graves, nearly every German village had a green with linden trees and under these trees the townsmen met to decide business. Linden has a sedative effect, and anyone who has ever attended a small town meeting can well understand the need for sedatives. In fact, next time I need to bring some business before such a venue I think I'll spray the room with linden essence or something.

Linden flowers were anciently used for convulsion and epilepsy. "They are universally recommended in epilepsies, and all nervous distempers, and upon that account make a part of the compound piony-water" (Quincy, 1736, 74). The flowers are an old European domestic medicine, still used for children with hyperactivity or fever —excess heat conditions (Maurice Mességué). It is suited to symptoms of kidney heat and irritation, including increased blood volume, essential hypertension, orthostatic hypertension, moist, warm skin, congestion of the kidneys, scanty, dark urine, and edema. It is cooling enough to work on herpes.

The tongue calling for linden flower is usually red, sometimes flame-shaped, and usually somewhat moist. This is a handy specific indication (Matthew Wood).

TASTE:

sweet • moist, cool

TISSUE STATES:

irritation, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervousness, restlessness, hyperactivity, insomnia.
- Panic attacks and anxiety.
- Nervous headache, migraine and dizziness; neuralgia.
- Convulsions in children.

RESPIRATION

- Influenza, fever, colds, coughs, mucus in the trachea and lungs.

DIGESTION

- Indigestion, nervous vomiting, painful digestion, colic, diarrhea.

CARDIOVASCULAR AND BLOOD

- Heart palpitation, cramp.
- Arteriosclerosis and hypertension associated with nervous tension.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Dark, scanty urine, edema.

FEMALE

- Pelvic inflammatory disease, uterine pain, bearing down sensations, inflammation of the genitalia.

FEVER

- Fever with profuse sweat that does not relieve.
- Fever, chills, shivering; profuse sweat with no relief from fever.
- Pain associated with heat, irritation, and spasm.

SKIN

- Itching, burning eruptions, sores, herpes, shingles (external; the bark is beaten to soft fiber, simmered in cream, milk, or milk and water, to make a soothing poultice).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The American species, *Tilia americana*, can be used in place of the European, *T. europaea*. However, the European species are officinal. Dosage of the tincture (1:5) is 2/5 to 5 ml 3x/day (David Hoffmann), but I use small doses with effect.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Maurice Mességué (1), David Hoffmann (1, 5, 8, 9), Julia Graves, Daniel Cobb (14).

Trifolium pratense. Red Clover.

Red clover is a member of the legume family native to central Asia but widely grown as a crop and naturalized throughout the world. It was introduced into Western herbalism by Samuel Thomson, who used a cooked-down paste for the external treatment of skin cancers. The diagnosis here is uncertain but it has demonstrated antineoplastic constituents. Subsequently it was more widely used as a blood purifier. Western herbal medicine is still getting acquainted with this simple agent. Red clover contains flavonoids, coumarins, saponins, resins, and volatile oils.

The flavor of this common pasture flower is sweet, the temperature cool and moist. As a consequence, red clover may be looked upon as a nutritive tonic, soothing to dry, irritable tissues. I have found that when it is needed the skin is usually dry. Red clover has a special affinity for the glands of the body, so that it is a remedy for swollen parotids (mumps), salivary gland congestion or excess secretion, lymphatic congestion, and other swollen, puffed up problems with glands. In addition, it thins the blood, like other members of the clover clan that possess natural coumarins.

Red clover is associated with conditions where the body walls off the offending matter, making a hard glandular cyst or node. Sometimes there might be a few along the course of a lymphatic drainage duct. Sometimes these cysts break open, especially in the sinuses, resulting in the sudden appearance of fever, sinus drainage, lung drainage. These cases are distinct in that they come on suddenly, without prior fever or sickness, then last for months (Dorothy Hall, 1988). Red clover will even help encyst cancerous tissue, but it will seldom cure cancer.

A writer to *Ellingwood's Therapeutist* (1908, 2, 7, 29) makes an interesting observation: "This remedy has a peculiar influence in improving the nutrition to the brain when impaired by overwork, especially in those cases where there is loss of memory for words, confused ideas, or other mental defects from functional causes. I

have prescribed this remedy in these cases and have obtained excellent results. I believe that it improves the circulation, not only of the nervous system but also of the entire capillary system, and including that of the extremities."

TASTE:

sweet • cool, moist

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

GLANDS, RESPIRATORY SYSTEM, SKIN

- Dry tear ducts.
- *Salivary glands;* dry; calcifications in the glands; profuse flow of saliva.
- Swollen parotids (mumps).
- Sudden sinus drainage, with fever, lasting for months; due to encysted infection breaking open.
- Drippy, seepy discharge from the salivary glands or posterior nares, causing irritation of the throat and lungs.
- Hard, swollen, encysted glands.
- Mastitis; encysted glands of the breast, from mastitis.
- Stomach acidity (root infusion).
- *Dry skin, insufficient secretion*.
- Cancer.
- External: on ulcers (root infusion).
- Cold sores and sore lips (root infusion).
- Insomnia, especially in children.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The flowers are almost always the part used. They are collected in midsummer, dried for use by infusion or extracted fresh in alcohol. Dose: 1–30 drops, 1–3x/day; needs to be persisted in for at least six weeks. J. V. Cerney (1976, 73) is the only author I have seen who routinely used an infusion of the roots.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (10), William Boericke (3), Dorothy Hall (6, 7), J. V. Cerney (8, 11, 12), Matthew Wood (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10-confirmed), Tommie Bass (13), David Hoffmann (13).

Trigonella foenum-graecum. Fenugreek.

Fenugreek is a legume native to the Old World (Europe, India, and China) that has been used for many centuries as a food and medicine. Because it is warm, soothing, and mucilaginous it is used to cleanse, nourish, and soothe the gastrointestinal and respiratory mucosa. It removes heat caused by putrefaction and fermentation, and is contraindicated in active heat (excitation). It contains flavonoids, mucilage, proteins, alkaloids, steroidal saponins, vitamins, and minerals.

Dorothy Hall presents a particularly detailed and useful account of fenugreek. It is indicated when there are sluggish lymphatics in indolent persons with poor dietary habits, fatty diet, high cholesterol, and increasing blood pressure. As a nutritive food it promotes lactation, hair growth, and semen production. These hormonal effects indicate great potential. One of Dorothy Hall's students described to me a case of Graves' disease with weight gain in a small, rotund woman that was completely stopped in two weeks, with weight loss, on fenugreek (5 drop doses). Phyllis Light has developed its use as a menopausal remedy.

Externally the seeds are ground to make a thick paste that is cooling, lubricating, soothing, and mucilaginous. It is especially

good for ulcers, boils, hard-to-heal sores, and wounds. The addition of charcoal will prevent the wound from becoming septic (Jethro Kloss).

TASTE:

pungent, sweet • warm • stimulating, mucilaginous

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Yellow complexion; averse to exercise; overweight; slack muscle tone; stagnant lymphatics.
- Debility, anemia, malnutrition, rickets.
- Counters excess use of milk products.
- Diabetes mellitus.

HEAD

- Hair loss.

RESPIRATION

- Sore throat (gargle).
- Chronic cough, bronchitis, asthma, emphysema; *hardened mucus*.
- Allergies, influenza.

DIGESTION

- Bad breath, poor digestion, heartburn, fermentation, flatulence, ulceration, putrefaction, nutritional debility.
- Dysentery.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM AND BLOOD

- Fatty deposits, cholesterol, high blood pressure; eats fatty food and suffers from it.

FEMALE

- Vaginitis.
- Lactation (increases).

MALE

- Sterility.

LYMPH/IMMUNE

- Stagnant lymphatics.
- Lymphatic cancer.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Sciatica, arthritis.

SKIN

- Does not perspire easily; fenugreek can cause smelly sweat for several days.
- Abscesses, boils, wounds, inflammation of the skin.

FEVER

- Fever; opens the pores.
- Fever with excess perspiration.

PREPARATION, TOXICITY, AND DOSAGE:

Fenugreek has a mild hormonal influence, promotes uterine bleeding, and is therefore contraindicated in pregnancy. The seed is used in decoction, gruel, powder/capsules, and paste. In addition, the seeds can be sprouted. Traditionally, the seed is often boiled in

milk. Soybean or nut milk can be used as well (Jethro Kloss). The seed does not extract in cold water.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Jethro Kloss (2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 19), Vasant Lad and David Frawley, Dorothy Hall (1, 11, 18, 20), Jack Ritchason (3, 11, 15), Phyllis Light (1-confirmed), Hildegard von Bingen (21).

Tussilago farfara. Coltsfoot.

Coltsfoot is native to Europe but widely naturalized in temperate regions of North America and perhaps elsewhere. It grows along beaten paths and roads where, in the old days, the foot of the colt would indeed have been felt. The broad leaf looks like the print of a horse. The flowers rise in the spring, before the leaves, leading to an old Roman or Italian name, "father before son." The leaf is thick, moist, and cool. The lower side is coated with down, which remains after the leaves have been dried, making them slightly adherent. Ben Charles Harris pointed to this as a signature for clingy, adhesive mucus. Apropos of this, Dorothy Hall (1988, 143) notes that coltsfoot should not be given in large doses at the beginning of treatment as it is apt to bring up large amounts of mucus that are hard to contend with since they are adherent and stick in the throat. The name also indicates a lung usage—long-winded animals like the fox and horse are associated with the lungs.

Coltsfoot contains mucilage in abundance, tannins, a bitter glycoside, alkaloids, flavonoids, resins, saponins, inulin (muscle sugar), some fruit acids, and minerals including silicon, zinc, and sodium. The burnt leaves yield a passable salt substitute. It also contains the pyrrolizidine alkaloids considered to be hepatotoxic, but seems to lack a delivery system to get them in the body. Rudolf Weiss points out that these alkaloids are not extracted from coltsfoot in water, so the herbal tea is an effective method for use.

“It is by all received as an excellent Pectoral,” writes John Quincy (1736). Coltsfoot is used after exposure to cold, damp, wind, or germs and viruses have brought about the appearance of a deep respiratory infection. The condition often becomes chronic, the lungs may be damaged by scar tissue, the mucus is deep-seated and dried up, hence difficult to raise, or wet and sticky, making it difficult to expel. Coltsfoot is often palliative, bringing up mucus and lessening the severity of the cough. Sometimes the condition is old and incurable, at other times it needs gentle means to restore integrity to the respiratory structure and mucosa, dry up the infection, dispel the bacteria, and energize the exhausted condition of the sick person (following Dorothy Hall). Respiratory conditions where the feet are sore (Sebastian Kneipp; confirmed, Matthew Wood).

“The peasants say that it comes in time for the spring fevers,” writes Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 50).

TASTE:

salty • cool, moist, and dry • mucilaginous, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- Vertigo, migraine, obstruction of the nose.

RESPIRATION

- Respiratory infections following exposure to cold, damp, and wind.
- Sinusitis, allergies.

- Sore throat, feels like broken glass, irritable, painful coughing, keeps one awake at night.
- Bronchitis, asthma, catarrh, colds, irritable coughs, emphysema, pleurisy, pneumonia, tracheitis, tuberculosis, whooping cough, smoker's cough.
- *Dry mucus, difficult to raise*.
- *When the mucus comes up it is adhesive, thick, and clogging to the throat.*
- Scar tissue in the lungs.
- Emphysema (palliative; a cup of warm tea in the morning to clear mucus).
- *Asthma; wet, greenish mucus* (expose slowly to coltsfoot as it can bring up too much mucus at once).
- Dry cough of children with rickettsial deformities (cf. *Chondrus*).
- Whooping cough in children (half a cup of tea sweetened with honey, 4x/day).
- Dry pleurisy.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

- Liver and gallbladder.

LYMPHATICS

- Scrofula, swollen glands in the neck.

FEMALE

- Menstruation, stopped by cold.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Bladder infections.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Lower back pain.
- Sore feet.
- Strains and sprains of joints and ligaments (external).

SKIN

- External ulcers, chronically weeping wounds.
- Burns, insect bites.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves are dried for use by infusion. Contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids, which are not soluble in water, so it is best prepared by tea. However, it can be used in small doses of the tincture (1–5 drops). In the old days coltsfoot was often smoked for relief. It is often combined with the great old respiratory standbys of European medicine: elecampane, mullein, marshmallow, and hoarhound.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Sebastian Kneipp (5, 19), Matthew Wood (4, 19-confirmed), Dorothy Hall (2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12), Samuel Henry (1, 4, 12, 15), Rudolf Weiss (9).

Urtica dioica, U. urens. Nettle, Nettles.

Urtica *is native to the Old World, but widely naturalized throughout the world. It has native cousins in the woods of North America. Nettle grows around septic systems, outhouses, and manure piles, demonstrating its utility in dealing with protein waste products. It is one of the plants highest in protein and helps all protein pathways in the body—digestion, immune response, liver metabolism, skin reactions, and kidney elimination. It contains chlorophyll, indoles (including histamine and serotonin), acetylcholine, flavonoids, vitamins (including C), proteins, and dietary fiber.*

Nettle, or nettles, is one of the fundamental remedies of traditional Western herbalism. It is high in protein, vitamins, and minerals, so that it is an excellent all-around nutritive tonic. It is especially used as an iron tonic during pregnancy. More specifically, nettles acts on the protein pathways in the body. It reduces allergic reactions to proteins (here the freeze-dried herb is preferred) and eliminates mucus on membranes resulting from allergy. (The root contains sterols and lectins that may stimulate T-cell or precise immune response.) Nettle probably also helps with the digestion and absorption of protein. Entering deeper into the body, it helps the liver build blood proteins. These help keep the plasma inside the blood vessels, reducing edema and low blood pressure resulting from loss of plasma into the tissues. Dorothy Hall (1988) looks upon nettle as a specific for low blood pressure. Nettle also helps with the removal of proteinaceous waste products (urates) from the system; hence it is a remedy in gout, arthritis, muscular soreness, tissue acidity, and kidney disease. It prefers to grow downstream from an

outhouse, septic system, or manure pile, indicating its affinity for high levels of protein.

In addition to general, nutritive effects and specific effects along protein pathways, nettle also has a specific action as a tropho-restorative, bringing back function to parts that have become paralyzed, atrophied, or functionally inactive. Perhaps it acts through the proteinaceous genetic material, which carries the codes for bodily functions. In the old days, the part paralyzed or arthritic or gouty was whipped with the fresh-picked nettle. I find it effective when the part has been paralyzed or depressed in function since the use of anesthesia. It also works internally on inactive kidneys, thyroid, menstruation, hormones, nerves, muscles, and so forth, to bring them back into effective operation.

Robin Rose Bennet had a famous case history where nettles restored the thyroid in a woman who had the gland surgically removed (by radioactive iodine) for hyperthyroidism, but regretted the surgery. This case history is well attested.

Here is a case history from my own records involving restored muscle function. A fifty-seven-year-old woman fell down her stairways with her leg bent back, ripping off the kneecap. She had to have football doctors reconnect the tendons to an artificial kneecap. About six weeks after the operation the muscles in the inner thighs started to atrophy and she began to lose mobility. The doctors told her she had to exercise her legs or the healing would not take place. Stuck in this situation she called me. When I put drops of nettle tincture on the inner thighs the reaction was so swift she could start hobbling around again. She returned to the path of walking and healing.

Since that time I have found that nettle is good for weakness in muscles of the inner thighs in middle-aged women, making them insecure about going down stairs. Clearly, in the above case, the wasting was the cause of the injury. In some menopausal women, especially stout, heavy ones, the pelvic attachments loosen up, the pelvis expands, and these muscles get weak. It stands to reason, therefore, that nettle would make an ideal strengthening tonic during pregnancy, toning the pelvic and thigh muscles needed for

delivery. (But wait! Nettles already is a pregnancy tonic for other reasons! No bypassing women's intuition!)

Now we can begin to appreciate the use of nettle for impotence. It was originally used by flagellation of the part, which may have given the partner some fulfillment, but this is unnecessary, to judge from the way it works internally and externally in tincture or infusion. Still, in a difficult case?

Nettle has a high level of affinity for the kidneys. It is well known in the herbal community for getting people off dialysis. Here is a simple case from my own records. A fifty-six-year-old woman called me from Maryland because she was suffering from severely swollen ankles. She had eaten some high protein foods as part of a weight loss diet. Shortly after, her urine turned pale, smelt fishy, and her ankles got swollen. I recommended nettle tea, tincture, or "whatever she could get." She took one dose of Urtica 30c from her homeopathic kit and followed with nettle tincture and (in a few days) nettle tea. By the next day the fishy smell was gone, the urine was no longer pale, and the swelling in the ankles was going down. The ankles remained slightly swollen for several weeks.

"When in doubt, give nettles" (David Hoffmann).

TASTE:

(young shoots and leaves) sweet, bitter, earthen • stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

depression, atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION

- *Low blood pressure* and concomitant problems.
- *Loss of hair, hair color;* poor circulation of blood to the head with lack of oxygen and iron pigment (external wash).

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Mental dullness, lack of concentration and mental acuity*.
- Memory lapses.
- Dead fish dullness of the eyes; drooping eyelids; brings a sparkle back to the eyes on administration.
- Fainting on rising, with low blood pressure.
- Tired, hard to get out of a chair and get going, rises with a sigh or grunt, but stays on task once activated; begins the day slowly, hard to stop at the end of the day.
- Yawning, sighing, sleepiness.
- *Pale, gray-pale face and skin tone*.
- Mouth sores.

RESPIRATION

- Mucus, bronchitis, asthma; grayish-pale skin color; poor oxygenation.
- *Low blood pressure; pulse relaxed, slow, and deep; poor nutrition to the heart.*

DIGESTION

- *Diarrhea, dysentery, chronic, mucus in stools*.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Distention and swelling of kidneys; edema and eczema of the fingers or elsewhere.
- *Inactive kidneys (requiring dialysis)* (seeds).
- *Chronic inflammation of the bladder, with abundant mucus discharge.*

MALE

- Impotence; difficulty producing and keeping an erection; associated with low blood pressure.
- Benign prostatic hypertrophy (root).

FEMALE

- *Menstruation: excessive, anemia from blood loss*.
- Premature cessation of menses.
- Pregnancy: anemia, low blood pressure.
- Lactation: deficient.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Atrophy and paralysis of muscles (voluntary and involuntary)*.
- Arthritis, *gout* (especially in those eating a rich, proteinaceous diet).
- Hypothyroid.

SKIN

- *Burns* with excess protein burdening the kidneys (external or internal).
- Hives; all bites, stings, itch, etc., that raise red, welt-like burns, stinging pain (ointment).
- Deer fly bites (urtication).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The fresh-picked plant can be used directly on parts that are paralyzed and inactive. Pick the young shoots in the spring as a medicine or food. The formic acid breaks down quickly after picking, so the best preservation is by immediate freeze-drying or tincturing. Extract fresh in alcohol. Dry the leaves for nutritive use. The taste of the tea can be improved by the addition of peppermint or lemon balm.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dorothy Hall (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 19, 27), Susun Weed, Matthew Wood (14, 23), Rolla Thomas (13, 16), David Winston (15), Michael Moore (19), homeopathic provings and

clinical experience, J. Compton Burnett (24), Margaret Tyler (26), Dorothy Shepherd (26), William Boericke (27), Laurel Dewey (28).

Vaccinium myrtillus. Bilberry.

The European bilberry is closely related to the American blueberry in botany and properties. However, it has been subjected to greater scientific scrutiny and widespread marketing. Therefore, although the properties may be similar, bilberry is much more widely used as a medicine, whereas blueberry is more widely used as a food. Both are members of the heath family and have the astringent and antiseptic properties characteristic of that family. Bilberry contains flavonoids (including cyanogens), tannins, triterpenes, pectin, fructose, fruit acids, vitamin A, and vitamin C. The berry and leaves have a long history of use, primarily as an astringent and coolant. In 1927 it was noted that bilberry was used in Europe, and blueberry in America, as folk remedies for diabetes. This congruence led to research in Europe: both are indeed important remedies in this disease. During the desperate Battle of Britain in World War II, the RAF pilots learned to use bilberry to enhance night vision. This led to further pharmacological study. Bilberry is now widely used as a general remedy for eye problems, but it is specific for enhancing night vision and reducing the ill-effects of diabetes on the retina.

Bilberry leaves are used, like the leaves of other heaths, as astringent antiseptics for urinary tract infection. In addition they improve lack of tone and ulceration in the mucosa of the digestive tract. They are also diuretic and are therefore used in edema and gravel to increase kidney discharge. “A tea made from the leaves is also a remedy for diabetes if taken for a prolonged period” (Grieve, 1931, 100). As an astringent they can stop lactation.

The fruit, high in vitamin C, was used for scurvy, which would account for symptoms such as ulceration of the skin and mucosa of the mouth and gums. The flavonoids decrease the fragility and

permeability of the capillaries, reducing hemorrhage and increasing blood flow into the periphery and decreasing platelet aggregation. At the same time the tannins improve tone on the venous side of the circulation. This can reduce tendencies to atherosclerosis, high blood pressure, and stroke. These properties produce a net "cooling" effect, to put it in energetic terms. The blood moves more freely and there is less congestion and heat.

John Hill (1740, 84) writes, "A syrup made of the juice of billberries, when not over ripe, is cooling and binding; it is a pleasant and gentle medicine for women whose menses are apt to be redundant, taken for a week before the time."

High levels of sugar make bilberry nutritive or "moistening," but this is moderated by the "drying" effect of the tannins. The anthocyanidin myrtillin helps to reduce blood sugar levels even though the berries are so sweet. This is an effect we find in many wild berries and natural sugar sources—they do not have the hyperglycemic effect of refined sugars.

The major modern contribution to our knowledge of bilberry revolves around the eye. Some of the anthocyanosides have an affinity to the retina, where they increase production of rhodopsin (visual purple). This helps the eyesight adapt to darkness and glare. Others prevent the destruction of the collagen forming the architectural framework for the structures of the eye. The antidiabetic properties protect against diabetic retinopathy. Even the tannins are constructive in some cases of cataract. Glaucoma, which is a sort of "high blood pressure of the eyes," may respond to the increased capillary and venous blood flow due to the flavonoids and tannins.

TASTE:

sweet, sour, moist, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

excitation, depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- Cerebral ischemia; stroke.

EYES

- Visual fatigue.
- Myopia.
- Retinal damage.
- Retinitis.
- Macular degeneration.
- Night blindness.
- Glaucoma.
- Cataract.
- Diabetic retinopathy.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Atherosclerosis.

DIGESTION

- Ulceration of the mouth and gums.
- Inflammation of the throat and pharynx.
- Gastroenteritis, Crohn’s disease, colitis.
- Ulceration of the GI.
- Irritable bowel syndrome.
- Diarrhea, dysentery.
- Diverticulosis.
- Hemorrhoids.
- Varicose veins.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Urinary tract infections.
- Edema.

FEMALE

- Vaginal discharge, leucorrhea.
- Menstrual bleeding excessive.

EXTREMITIES

- Raynaud's disease.

SKIN

- Dermic ulceration.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Bilberry is usually available in a commercial preparation. Dose of the tincture: 20–30 drops after meals (Daniel Gagnon).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Christopher Menzies-Trull (1–23), John Hill (24), Rudolf Weiss.

Valeriana officinalis. Valerian.

Valerian is a native of Europe widely naturalized in the temperate regions around the world. It is an ancient traditional remedy for overexcitement and sleeplessness. With its acrid flavor, valerian root may be considered almost the archetype of the acrid and bitter/acrid herbs that treat the constricted or tense tissue state. Modern studies of the constituents and their actions validate the traditional teachings. Valerian contains a group of compounds called valepotriates that have an antispasmodic action, and together with some of their breakdown products have a depressive effect on the central nervous system. The volatile oil contains valerenone and valerenic acid; the latter also has a depressant effect on the CNS. The valerenone and valepotriates relax constricted muscles.

Valerian is principally used as a remedy for insomnia or to relax muscles and ease pain. Ellingwood (1918, 125) writes, “Its action

upon the nervous system is best obtained when the circulation of those centers is inactive and feeble, especially when there is a paleness of the face and the skin is cool. It is directly indicated in hysterical conditions of whatever character with feebleness; with nervous excitement, and morbid vigilance, in hysterical epilepsy [or seizures, really] and nervous disturbances incident to menopause. Its general soothing effect in all these cases is desirable. It controls distress and imaginary pain and produces quiet, permitting sleep and rest."

Fyfe (1909, 753) writes, "Valerian is an excellent cerebral stimulant, and is employed with advantage in diseases resulting from enfeebled cerebral circulation. Its administration often affords great relief in the high tension common to many nervous states, and in wakefulness it exerts a sleep-producing power of much value."

Valeriana is a powerful relaxant to the nerves and muscles, but in large doses or susceptible persons (and cats) it has the opposite property—causing nervousness, restlessness, wakefulness, and twitching followed by drowsiness, sleepiness, lessened sensibility, and relaxation. It has been classified as a stimulant and a depressant, but it is ultimately a relaxant, reducing neuromuscular tension.

William LeSassier says valerian is "a knocker-outer. Makes one numb. It is generally overused and overrated. It's great for very freaked out people who need immediate relief (Goldenseal and Lobelia too)." I agree with this assessment wholeheartedly; valerian is really just a palliative sedative with a generalized, nonspecific range of activity. Its best use is as a teaching aid to understand the pure action of the valerianic compounds, which occur in other plants.

TASTE:

acrid

TISSUE STATE:

constriction

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Pale complexion, cool extremities.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Nervous, irritated, tense, despondent.
- Nervous breakdown, nervous fatigue, atrophy from constriction.
- Insomnia, wakefulness, nervousness, restlessness, and tension, especially when associated with spinal pain, intestinal spasm, and flatulence.
- “Lack of concentration and attentiveness, in tense people” (1–3 drops).
- “Holds anger inside, causing knotted feeling in stomach or low back.”

HEAD

- Temporal and frontal headache.

RESPIRATION

- Bronchial spasm; colds, coughs.
- Spasmodic cough, asthma, and dyspnea.
- Asthma in thin, pale persons.

DIGESTION

- Flatulence, colic; spasms and convulsions associated with nervous tension.
- Stomach hyperacidity, ulcers.
- “Emotional dyspepsia.”

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Nervous heart palpitations; high blood pressure; slows and strengthens the beat, increases peripheral circulation.
- “Emotionally induced high blood pressure.”

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Bladder spasm.

SEXUAL SYSTEM

- Menstrual spasm, amenorrhea.
- Labor; pains after giving birth.
- Low libido, frigidity.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Lower back spasm.
- Convulsions, epilepsy, incoordination.
- Arthritis, gout, incoordination, paralysis.

FEVER

- Fever with spasm; measles, scarlet fever.

OTHER

- Counters the effects of alcohol.

PREPARATIONS, CAUTIONS, AND DOSAGE:

The fresh root provides the best tincture, preserving the volatile oils. It is more “tonic and less reactive” than preparations from the dried root (Matthew Becker). Small doses are generally relaxing, whereas large doses are stimulating. However, reaction is idiosyncratic. In some people valerian produces the symptoms it is supposed to cure —nervousness, irritation, wakefulness, restlessness, etc. Dose: 1–60 drops.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Finley Ellingwood, John William Fyfe, Matthew Becker (5), Matthew Alfs (1-confirmed, 6, 10, 13, 15, 19).

Verbascum thapsus. Mullein.

Mullein is a member of the Scrophulariaceae family native to the Old World but widely naturalized—I have seen it growing in Death Valley. It is one of the premier cough and respiratory remedies of the European tradition and is widely used in the western hemisphere. It contains flavonoids, mucilage, gum, resin, bitter glycosides, iridoid monoterpenes, triterpene saponins, and volatile oils.

The infusion of mullein leaf releases a salty mucilage. Thus, it is used as an emollient to bring water into hardened, closed places. It draws water into dried out tissues. (The leaf, dipped in wax, acts like a wick.) This activity causes the release of secretions from the tissues, and this brings a favorable conclusion to the disease process. Hence, mullein is indicated in conditions where the tissues are dry or where water is caught in isolated pockets. It is particularly used for dry, irritable, tickly coughs—the tickle sensation is usually evidence of inflammation conjoined with water stuck in the mucosa or skin. It is indicated in old coughs where the velvety carpet of the lungs, the hairs, are inflamed or worn down, so to speak. There may be tightness preventing full inspiration, tightness in the throat or voice box, or tightness in the sinuses and a feeling of tightness in the brain. Remember, there need not be secretion, since this is suppressed in the mullein profile. Mullein opens the lungs, reduces coughing and tightness, lubricates the mucosa, relaxes the larynx, opens the sinuses, and causes a more open feeling in the head and brain. The movement of the plant is upward, from the lungs to the head—this is analogous to the way the herb rises sharply upward from the ground.

Dr. William Cook (1869) spoke of the actions of mullein on the "absorptives" in the gut—that is, the veins and lymphatics that pick up water and food. He says it promotes absorption in cellular dropsy, chronic abscesses, pleuritic effusions, swollen glands, and similar accumulations of fluid.

I have long used mullein as a muscular and skeletal remedy. The original indications I discovered myself. Mullein improves the lubrication of the connective tissue in joints, hence improving the health of cartilage. It releases synovial fluid into the bursa and disperses internal fluids into the surrounding tissues, lubricating joints, muscles, bones, and ligaments. It is thus a remedy for complex fractures, where the bone needs to be lubricated to be returned to its place. It is also indicated in spinal dryness, inflexibility, and pain, and nerve pain along pinched or irritated nerve tracts. These indications have been further developed by some of my students and readers. Jim MacDonald, of southern Michigan, has added some additional insights. Mullein helps to straighten the spine—he uses the basal rosette leaves or root at the end of the first year, since these contain the "intelligence" that sends the stalk straight up in the second year.

Mullein also has an influence on the nerves and mind. Louise Tenney (1983, 89) writes, "Mullein is a great pain killer and helps induce sleep. It has a calming effect on all inflamed and irritated nerves. This is why it works so well in controlling coughs, cramps, and spasms. It has the ability to loosen mucus and move it out of the body. It is valuable for all lung problems because it nourishes as well as strengthens. The crushed fresh flowers have been used to remove warts. The tea has been used for dropsy, sinusitis, and swollen joints. The hot tea helps when applied to mumps, tumors, sore throat, and tonsillitis."

William LeSassier used to say that mullein was for "intellectuals and hot air people." I have confirmed this several times. It is for people who think too much and congest the mind, or suffer mental tightness and congestion following difficult projects. Mullein gives such a person a feeling like the mind is opened up to breezes on a fresh spring day—speaking from personal experience. William also

emphasizes that the voice box is often affected. The voice can be too high or too low.

TASTE:

(leaf) salty, mucilaginous

TISSUE STATE:

atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- General dryness and atrophy.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- "Intellectuals and hot air people"; people who think too much.
- Nervousness, hyperthyroidism.
- *Insomnia*.

HEAD

- Sinusitis, tightness in head.
- Earache with pain, wax in ear (oil of the flowers).

RESPIRATION

- Voice unnaturally high or low, due to inflammation of the pharynx.
- Sore throat, hoarseness, tonsillitis, mumps.
- Allergies, sinusitis, *subacute, relapsing bronchitis, asthma, pleurisy*, pneumonia, *croup*, emphysema, tuberculosis.
- Cough deep, "basso profundo"; from inflammation of the velvety linings of the respiratory tract.
- Asthma from bronchial tension; dilates the lungs and moistens.
- *Cough; dry, harsh, racking, shakes the frame*.

- *Bleeding from the lungs*.

DIGESTION

- *Diarrhea, dysentery*, enteritis, and colitis with weakening from loss of fluids.
- *Bleeding from the bowels*.
- Hemorrhoids, painful, bleeding.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Nephritis; painful urination.

LYMPHATICS

- Chronic swollen lymphatics.
- Lymphedema after surgical removal of lymph nodes for breast cancer (cf. *Quercus*).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Painful injuries to fingers, toes, spine, areas rich in nerves.
- Joints swollen, with weakness and pain.
- Spinal injuries; pain, misalignment, lack of synovial lubrication.
- Broken bones that are hard to set are quickly returned to their correct position under the influence of *Verbascum*.
- Bruises.

OTHER

- Chronic abscesses, with pain.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The leaves and roots are picked during the first season; the flowers in the middle of the second. The leaves are usually used as a tea. The flowers are usually extracted in olive oil in the sunshine (Constantine Herring). At least one author recommends the “tops” (Ralph Russell).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Louise Tenney (3, 4, 8, 9, 13–16, 21, 24, 25), Constantine Herring (6), William LeSassier (2, 7, 11), William Boericke (7, 10), Rosemary Gladstar (18), Hari Jot Singh (19), Matthew Wood (1, 2-confirmed, 5, 9, 12, 20, 22, 23), Jim MacDonald (22).

Verbena officinalis. Vervain.

The European vervain has a very ancient tradition of use. It was considered one of the most important plants of the druids. It was mentioned by the Greek and Roman authors, and was used in the Renaissance down to the present time. It is one of the seven herbs of Ireland that have power over forces natural and supernatural. Dr. Bach included it among his thirty-eight flower essences. The mental state for which it is remedial is one of intense idealism and self-will, with a lack of physical energy to sustain the output. This pattern is also found in regard

to the American blue vervain. To a large extent these medicines can be used interchangeably.

"The fresh gathered tops are used" in infusion, writes Sir John Hill (1740, 379). This concurs with the usual method for picking the American blue vervain. "It is warm upon the stomach, and a continued use of it will remove nervous complaints."

TASTE:

bitter, acrid

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Nervousness.
- Headache (poultice).
- Trigeminal neuralgia.
- Pain in the ear (poultice).
- Tinnitus.
- Ophthalmic complaints.
- Pulmonary catarrh.
- Pleurisy.
- Weakness of the heart.
- Dysmenorrhea.
- Parturition: induce labor.
- Lactation: insufficient.
- Malaria.
- Intermittent chills and fever.
- Cellulitis.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Dan Kenner and Yves Requena.

Veronica officinalis. Speedwell.

The common speedwell is a member of the Scrophulariaceae family, which is so richly endowed with a wide variety of valuable medicines of diverse use (mullein, digitalis, rehmannia, scrophularia, linaria, and others). Veronica is widely dispersed in the Old World and naturalized in the New. At one time it occupied a position of importance in the folk medicine of Europe. It was one of the plants associated with the mysteries of Christ, and kept as an officinal herb in the monasteries and shops. Veronica was the name of the woman who took pity on Jesus and washed his face when he was been driven to his execution. The image of Jesus' face remained on the cloth to produce the "veron eikon" *(true image) (Fernie, 1914, 485). Today speedwell has almost completely dropped from use in Western herbalism.*

"It has been long held famous among country folk as an excellent plant for coughs, asthma, and pulmonary consumption. The leaves are bitter, with a rough [astringent] taste; and a decoction of the whole plant stimulates the kidneys. The infusion promotes perspiration and reduces feverishness. The juice may be boiled into a syrup with honey, for asthma and catarrhs.

"When applied outwardly, it is said to cure the itch; and by some it has been asserted that a continued use of the infusion will overcome sterility, if taken daily as a tea" (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 484).

One of the few twentieth-century herbalists who used veronica was Ben Charles Harris (1972). He speaks of gathering it often, mostly as a substitute for watercress in salads. He considered its habitat, in low, wet places, as evidence of its usefulness in kidney problems. It is a "solvent-eliminator" acting on stones, toxins, and mucus. It also is suited to irritable throat and respiratory organs. To remove hardened mucus in coughs, bronchitis, and asthma.

"Speedwell is commended by Crato as a specifick in the cholick," writes Salmon (1710, 56, 137). "Crato prefers the simple decoction of speedwell with sugar, before all the more famous and great medicines inwardly given for the stone: the use (saith he) of a

clyster made only of a decoction of speedwell with sugar, will do more good than any medicine taken by the mouth."

Harald Tietze (1996, 45) is one of the few modern herbalists who use speedwell. "It is preferred for any skin disorders. The fresh plant juice has proved itself best for chronic disorders of the skin. To rub the tincture into the skin is good for rheumatism and gout." He adds, "Instead of taking it in the morning, like most other herbs, speedwell should be taken in the evening to calm the nerves and to give a peaceful sleep."

Vinca major, V. minor. Greater and Lesser Periwinkle.

These two plants are closely related members of the Apocynaceae family, native to Europe. In southern climes they ripen their seeds; in northern areas they grow vine-wise across the ground. The apocynaceaes are a very potent family. Hence, it is not surprising that periwinkle is sometimes known as "sorcerer's violet" and has been used to drive away "wycked spirits." It is also used as a "love medicine." The Book of Secrets *by pseudo-Albertus Magnus (not a very reliable author) says that it will increase love between a husband and wife. The name* vinca *means "to bind," referring to its growth habits, its magical uses, and its medicinal use as an astringent. It is believed to have an effect upon the inner eye. It contains tannins (binding), indole alkaloids (mind-altering), the alkaloid reserpine, and volatile oils*.

"Both the periwinkles are used in medicine for their acrid, astringent and tonic properties" (Grieve, 1931, 631). Thus they are binding to outflow, but also relaxing in cramping. Both uses are well attested. "*Vinca major* is used in herbal practice for its astringent and tonic properties in menorrhagia and in hemorrhages generally. For conditions of mucus in the intestines and lungs, diarrhea, congestions, hemorrhages, etc., periwinkle tea is a good remedy. In cases of scurvy and for relaxed sore throat and inflamed tonsils, it

may also be used as a gargle. For bleeding piles, it may be applied externally, as well as taken internally."

It was considered a good remedy for cramp, Lord Bacon himself testifying that a limb suffering from cramp would be cured if bands of green periwinkle were tied round it; and William Coles, in his *Adam in Eden* (1657), gives a case of a friend who was "vehemently tormented with the cramp for a long while which could be by no means eased till he had wrapped some of the branches hereof about his limbs." In my experience, *Vinca* is for tension that *begins in the legs and spreads upward to the rest of the system*. In one case the woman had a very hard, tight, static sensation in the lower pulse positions on the wrist—a perfect illustration of tension in the lower extremities.

Periwinkle greater and lesser both contain alkaloids. There are some differences between the exact alkaloids in each one. Although the properties are similar, the greater has been cited as a lymphatic alterative and the lesser as a cerebral tonic (Menzies-Trull). A substance called vinblastine has been isolated that shows some promise in choriocarcinoma, Hodgkin's disease, and other forms of cancer.

TASTE:

acrid, astringent

TISSUE STATES:

constriction, relaxation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Behavior disorders, lack of attention, irritability, restlessness (lesser).

HEAD

- Milk crust of infants (lesser; 2–10 drops in water, 3–4x/day).
- Cerebral atherosclerosis, optic atrophy, hearing deficit, tinnitus, Ménière's disease, vertigo, poor memory (lesser).
- Headache, temporal to crown, ache behind the eyes, watery eyes (lesser).
- Nosebleed (lesser).
- Gingivitis.
- Relaxed sore throat, swollen tonsils, inflamed tonsils (gargle).

DIGESTION

- Gastric hemorrhage, dyspepsia, flatulence.
- Relaxation of the intestines, chronic diarrhea, chronic constipation.
- Mucus in the intestines.
- Bleeding internal hemorrhoids.

FEMALE

- PMS (lesser).
- *Menorrhagia, metrorrhagia*.
- Vaginal discharge, leucorrhea.
- Mastitis, galactorrhea.

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Cramp in the lower limbs*.

SKIN

- Skin disorders, sores, wounds.

OTHER

- Hypoglycemia (greater).
- Diabetes mellitus (greater).
- Cancer (greater).
- Ulcers.

- Dandruff.
- Nightmares.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Infusion of the dried leaves. Pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1 teaspoon of dried herb and infuse for 10–15 minutes (David Hoffmann). Tincture of the fresh leaves, 1–3 drops, 1–3x/day (Matthew Wood). Tincture of the dried leaves.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Brain tumor, may cause intracranial bleeding and pressure.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Maude Grieve (2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17, 19), Christopher Menzies-Trull (1, 3–6, 8, 12–15, 17–20), Louise Tenney (9, 11, 16, 21, 22, 23), Matthew Wood (4, 16), David Hoffmann (13).

Viola odorata. Sweet Violet.

Violets have a long history of use in European medicine. The blue varieties are generally used and sweet violet (Viola odorata) *is officinal. The leaves and flowers together are used; they have a sweet, slightly*

mucilaginous, slightly salty taste and cool impression. Violets contain flavonoids, mucilage, salicylates, tannins, essential oils, an alkaloid, saponins, and minerals (especially calcium and magnesium). The root and seeds contain a substance like emetine, which causes vomiting; hence only the leaves and flowers are used in herbalism.

"Violets have a very mild nature and possess no harmful properties. They are always cold and moist when fresh and green and are used as balm or medicine to cool … heated and afflicted parts of the body; also inflammation of the eyes. Relieves the pain of quinsy and is good for the falling sickness in children, especially in the earlier stages" (Chalid Ottway, 1933, 285).

Viola is suited to cases where the mucosa is dry, when expectoration needs to be increased. It "has a long history of use as a cough remedy, especially for bronchitis, and may be of benefit in upper respiratory catarrh" (David Hoffmann, 2003, 594). It has an affinity to the lymphatic system, and is indicated when there is lymphatic stagnation and swollen glands, often in the throat and around the ears, in association with dry skin and constipation. As a moistening remedy it acts on the kidneys, bladder, and chronic arthritic deposits and skin conditions such as eczema.

Dorothy Hall (1988, 306) comments on the resemblance between the nodules that form on the roots and runners of violets and the nodules of the lymphatic system. "The medicinal uses of the violet, flowers, leaves and creeping roots, had previously been obscure to me but if the plant cleared lymphatic blockages and renewed normal lymph flow, then the ancient writer's observations made sense." Dorothy Hall seems to have the same approach I have: if she can see the signature she can understand the properties. She recommends violet leaf tincture or extract when there is lymphatic stagnation, enlargement of the spleen, and changes in the components of the blood that may foreshadow cancer.

Violet is widely used in cancer. It is one of the few remedies with a proven track record in cancer involving the breasts, lymphatics, and lungs. Also in skin cancer (Hilde Hemmes).

TASTE:

sweet, slightly salty • mucilaginous • cool and moist

TISSUE STATES:

atrophy, stagnation

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

CONSTITUTION, COMPLEXION, CHARACTERISTIC SYMPTOMS

- Children with swollen glands, dry skin, and constipation.

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- Shy, “shrinking violet.”
- Shy, flabby children, with moist skin and palms.

HEAD

- Severe headaches.
- Inflammation of the eyes.
- Infections in the mouth.

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM AND LYMPHATICS

- Sinus catarrh.
- Chronic congestion of the glands around the ears and in the throat.
- Sore throat, hoarseness, dryness of the upper respiratory tract, chronic cough, associated with dryness (violet syrup).
- Bronchitis, asthma, whooping cough (violet syrup).
- Feverish pulmonary catarrh.

DIGESTION

- Constipation.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Gravel.
- Urinary tract infection.

FEMALE

- Breast lumps, benign and malignant.

EXTREMITIES

- Arthritis of the wrists.

SKIN

- Skin dry; sore, raw (external).
- Eczema.

OTHER

- Cancer of the lymphatics, breasts, lungs, skin (poultice of fresh leaf and flower is best).
- Epilepsy and nervous disorders.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Violet flowers and leaves traditionally are not boiled to extract the active parts. Sir John Hill (1740, 380) wrote, “The flowers are the part used; boiled water is to be poured upon them just enough to cover them, and it is to stand all night; when it is strained clear off, the sugar is to be added to it, at the rate of two pounds to each pint, and it is to be melted over the fire; this makes syrup of violets, an excellent gentle purge for children; the leaves are dried also, and are used in the decoctions for clysters. An infusion of them works by urine.” Infusion: cold maceration of the flowers and leaves for 8 hours, followed by slow warming to preserve the delicate properties of the plant (Rogers). Violet flower syrup mixed with almond oil is a “capital laxative for children” (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 541).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Claudia Wingo (1), Flower Essence Society (2, 3), Plinius (4), Chalid Ottway (5, 20), Ben Charles Harris (7, 9), Dorothy Hall (8, 9), W. T. Fernie (11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20), John Hill (12, 14), David Hoffmann (14, 18), Hilde Hemmes (19).

Viola tricolor. Pansy, Heartsease.

Wild pansy has found a small niche in European medicine as an external specific against eczema. This use originated in homeopathy. Modern studies have shown that it contains flavonoids, which reduce inflammation, and saponins, which are cleansing and diuretic. It also contains salicylates, rutin, mucilage, bitters, and resins. The root is emetic.

"Dr. Johnson derived the word Pansy from *panacea*, as curing all diseases, but this was a mistake. The true derivation is from the French *pensee*, 'thought,' as Shakespeare knew, when making Ophelia say: 'There is Pansies—that's for thoughts' " (W. T. Fernie, 1914, 539). And since the heart is associated with thoughts, we arrive also at the name "heartsease." The original use of this remedy was, therefore, to reduce excessive and unwanted thoughts. Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, showed that *Viola tricolor* produced skin eruptions and reasoned out that it was a remedy for milk crust and scald head in children, and eczema in adults.

PREPARATIONS, CAUTIONS, AND DOSAGE:

Dosage of the tincture: 15–20 drops, 2x/day. External preparations are also used. It is not considered entirely safe in pregnancy. It probably has many of the same uses as common violet.

Viscum album. Mistletoe.

The druids valued mistletoe highly for its religious symbolism and medicinal properties. It continued to have a place in European folk practice for many centuries. Its most popular current use, as a remedy for high blood pressure, is of recent origin. For an account of how it was formerly conceived to operate we need to turn to an older source. Richard Hool (1922, 77) gives his usual excellent description of these medicinal properties, quoted below. He valued it highly as a nervine relaxant. Viscum *contains flavonoids, sugars, protein, amines, terpenoids, sterols, mucilage, and tannins. Active ingredients include lectins, which stimulate neutrophils, and viscotoxin, which is cardioselective and reduces the ventricular rate. Rudolf Steiner introduced the use of mistletoe for cancer, based on the doctrine of signatures. Some of the flavonoids, sugars, and proteins have shown antineoplastic properties*.

"As a nervine tonic I value mistletoe as superior to all other remedies I have come in contact with. It is now about 35 years since I first made use of it in cases of nervous complaints, and during that time I have had many opportunities of noting the results which have accrued from its employment. Where the decoction of mistletoe is given in from one or two teaspoonfuls to one wineglassful, according to the age of the patient, and the severity of the case, every one, two, or three hours, particularly in fits, epilepsy, and St. Vitus' dance, it will be found that it soon soothes and quiets the irritability of the nervous system, at the same time giving tone and regularity of action, diminishing cerebral excitement, abating delirium, and controlling febrile excitement; exciting diaphoresis and diuresis, and accomplishing its work without any subsequent unpleasant reaction." One can see the action on the circulation and heart in this description. This sort of usage led to the application of viscum in cardiovascular problems and high blood pressure.

Dr. Tascher, in 1892, published his findings of the utility of viscum in the treatment of cardiovascular irregularities and diseases. It is beneficial for hypertrophy of the heart, with valvular insufficiency, edema of the extremities, a small, weak pulse,

shortness of breath with inability of the patient to recline on the back. Doses of 20–30 minims of the fluid extract produced a full, strong, regular pulse, arrested the dyspnea, and allowed the patient to rest in a recumbent position. In some cases, given in large doses, it produced diaphoresis, diuresis, and serous discharges from the bowels. These actions are helpful in edema, though this effect did not always occur. Subsequently, viscum came into use as a remedy for the reduction of high blood pressure, especially where there is arteriosclerosis.

Mistletoe opens up circulation to areas that have been cut off from adequate blood supply by tension. It reduces cardiovascular tension and blood pressure, while bringing in new blood, blood sugar, and healing to areas long cut off, tensed up, weakened, or damaged. It thus acts on congestion of the ovaries, uterus, and prostate.

Dr. Brodnax, of Louisiana, introduced viscum into use for obstetric purposes. Dr. Finley Ellingwood (1918, 153) was probably the best writer on obstetrics of any of the nineteenth-century botanical doctors. His accounts are most detailed, bringing forth the specific indications and character of the remedy. “It is indicated where there is a flow of blood to the brain, and frequent headache and flushing of the face. In hysteria, epilepsy and other nervous diseases; in paroxysms of tearing and rending pains, rheumatic and neuralgic, it is a pain subduer of much power. With the above conditions it is exceedingly valuable in diseases of women, in amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, and as an oxytocic.

“In its action on the womb it is in some particulars superior to ergot. It is a drug capable of producing intermittent uterine action, as distinguished from the tonic contractions caused by some other oxytocic medicines. It exerts its full force on the long muscles of the uterus, acting on the fundus mainly, while the cervix remains soft and uncontracted.

“It may be given early in labor to give tone to the contractions; does not act spasmodically, but steadily and for a long time; it is not followed by any untoward effect; does not, like ergot, produce hourglass contractions; has a tendency to keep the womb contracted

after the expulsion of the placenta and attachments; does not act on the circular muscles of the womb; is a safe oxytocic, as the effects can be continued for hours with small doses." It can induce labor, and is contraindicated during pregnancy, except to facilitate labor in its correct time. Herbalist Kim Dudley, of Canberra, Australia, adds that viscum is also useful for hot flashes in menopausal women.

Mistletoe was at one time considered a specific for cramping, pain, and convulsion due to typhoid fever and high fevers damaging the fluids and nervous apparatus. It is specific for heart problems resulting from typhoid. It is used for asthmatic spasm, but is not supposed to be used while persons are on asthma drugs.

Eva Graf (1978, 107) says it is a powerful medicine for people who have ended a relationship and are not very happy about it. She uses it when a person has suffered the sudden loss of a loved one or a pet. She says mistletoe helps a person breathe through the emotional problem, so they can breathe more deeply. It thus promotes contemplation, reflection, and recovery. It releases nervous tension and pain associated with uptight breathing patterns and psychological resistance. One of her students pointed out that mistletoe is associated with positive feelings of the heart, like kissing under the mistletoe, but also with loss, grief, and loneliness. It soothes the nervous system and brings peace to the mind and heart. Because it is such a powerful cardiac drug we must use it with mindfulness and heartfulness. It requires wisdom, care, compassion, and caution and it brings this to the people who need it. Mistletoe is an old plant of the druids, the wise.

Rudolf Steiner introduced mistletoe for the treatment of cancer. He was led to this insight through the doctrine of signatures—the parasitical mistletoe reminds one of the parasitical cancer growing on the organism. Research has shown that if mistletoe is mixed with cancer cells it will puncture the cell walls. Although there is not much record of the use of viscum for cancer in the folk medical record, occasional references are found. New Zealand herbalist James Neil (1998, 38) wrote in 1891, "The juice of the plant evaporated makes birdlime. Applied to tumours it softens and heals

them; while mixed with rosin it is said to make a good ointment in ulcers."

TISSUE STATE:

constriction

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

MIND, SENSES, NERVES, EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY

- *Mental tension, emotional pain, loss of a loved one*.
- *Mental disturbance, nervousness, hysteria*.

HEAD

- Migraine headache.
- Flow of blood to the brain, frequent headache, flushing of the face.
- Delirium, febrile excitement.

RESPIRATION

- Asthma, spasm of the lungs, spasmodic coughing.

DIGESTION

- Cholera.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- *High blood pressure*.
- *Hypertrophy of the heart with valvular insufficiency*, edema of the extremities.
- Small, weak pulse, shortness of breath.

KIDNEYS AND BLADDER

- Bedwetting.
- Edema; increases flow of urine.

FEMALE

- *Inflammation of the womb, cramping, excessive bleeding with pain.*
- *Amenorrhea.*
- *Oxytocic.*

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- *Epilepsy, convulsions; paroxysmal tearing and rending pains, neuralgia.*
- *Wild swings between tension and relaxation and swings in blood pressure.*
- *Tension of muscles, head, spine, heart, lungs, intestines, uterus.*

OTHER

- Hypoglycemia.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The whole plant is gathered in berry. That from the oak was supposed to be the best (here we still see the influence of the druids) but Hool says that mistletoe from any tree will suffice, even though the parasite picks up the taste of the tree it lives on. It is impaired by exposure to air and stored in airtight jars for use as tea. It is also used in tablets, extracts, and tinctures. “The remedy has failed because the agent used was inert, dried and, perhaps, old. The preparations must be made from the green plant, and the dose must be sufficiently large and frequently given. In some cases it may be necessary to repeat the dose every fifteen minutes” (Ellingwood, 1918, 153). Even the specific medicine, which the eclectics used in some medicines as low as a drop a dose, was given in 1–40 minims. The normal dose of the tincture is 5–60 minims.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Not to be used during pregnancy. Not to be used when taking drugs for asthma.

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Richard Hool (4, 5, 12, 16), Dr. Tascher (8, 9, 10, 12), Finley Ellingwood (2, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18), Eva Graf (1), Glenda Croft (17), Louise Tenney (2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 19).

Vitex agnus-castus. Chaste Berry.

Chaste tree is a shrub native to the Mediterranean region but grown more widely as an ornamental. The berry was used in medieval Europe to decrease the sex drive and stimulate lactation. It has been studied in modern pharmacology and used on the idea that it increases progesterone and decreases estrogen. The pungent, warm, stimulating berry contains volatile oils, iridoid glycosides, flavonoids, and bitters. It is a cousin of the vervains.

Vitex is one of the darlings of modern phytotherapy. It is believed that it contains a substance that binds with dopamine receptors in the pituitary. It therefore influences pituitary secretion, including prolactin (controls lactation) and luteinizing hormone (promotes progesterone). Although it has been used successfully to remove ovarian cysts (associated with high FSH and estrogen levels?) it has also caused ovarian cysts (progesterone can accelerate the formation of the corpus luteum, trapping the egg in the ovary and causing a watery cyst). So care should be taken in its use.

I never managed to understand vitex or get it to work based on pharmacological theory. Instead, I learned from herbalists who had developed an understanding of its nature through clinical experience. The independent testimony of the following three herbalists (from Massachusetts, Colorado, and Australia) dovetails nicely.

Herbalist Margi Flint says vitex is a remedy for people “caught between the material and spiritual worlds.” They are striving for spirit, but “not yet there.” A door slams shut on their path. “It is a five-finger plant,” she remarks. It resembles the hand, “showing that there is interference, but also the capacity for change and freedom.” It is indicated in puberty in both sexes. It is beneficial for boys who are oversexed, preoccupied by sex, obsessed. “It calms them down.” In younger people it is indicated by the “hunter look.” It can normalize the cycle in teenage girls. Vitex is also indicated in menopause and older people in general, but here it tends to have a stimulating effect on the sex drive. “They had an expectation for excitement, spiciness and vitality in life but they feel that they missed it,” continues Margi. Now they have given up, “given up the ghost.” Chaste berry “brings back spice and rekindles the flame.” In older people “there is often a history of interference, of some kind, in their libido, from old stuff in childhood, teen years or young adulthood, with years of suppression.”

Herbalist Matthew Becker reports that vitex is a reliable remedy for hysteria, nervousness, and hyperactivity. These indications are ancient and traditional. He cites sources from medieval Egypt and contemporary South America. In this capacity it acts on men as well as women. It is especially indicated when “there is a feeling of being hunted,” he says. “Something is after you, looking over your shoulder.” (I guess H. P. Lovecraft could have used some chaste berry.) There is difficulty falling asleep. Matthew Becker also associates this sensation with blue vervain—I associate it with lycopus. He combines vitex with motherwort in some cases. He suggests that the medieval use, to decrease the sex drive, is based on the reduction of nervousness and excessive preoccupation.

Herbalist Patricia Huenecke, of Canberra, Australia, has used vitex as a specific for attention deficit and hyperactivity in children. She has used it successfully in more than twenty cases. It controls the heat. She surmised that it works by stimulating the pituitary, which then normalizes the energy of the body.

TASTE:

pungent • diffusive

TISSUE STATE:

depression

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

- Hysteria, nervousness, hyperactivity.
- The hunted, or hunter, look; feels like a hunted animal; looking over the shoulder; haunted.
- Sexual obsession and preoccupation in teenagers, especially boys; inappropriate sexual acting out.
- Irregular cycles in teenage girls.
- Acne; male and female.
- Feels a need for change.
- Difficulty falling asleep.
- Lactation: initiates or increases secretion of milk, normalizes when there is too much.
- Depression since cessation of lactation.
- Breast inflammation, tenderness, and pain; cystic breast growth.
- Depression in menopause and older life; feels a lack of spiciness, sex drive.
- Lack of sex drive from sexual abuse, exploitation, overuse (small doses).
- Diarrhea.
- Swollen prostate.
- Amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea.
- PMS with breasts swollen and painful.
- Infertility, sterility (give during the second half of the cycle).
- Uterine fibroids, bleeding fibromas, menorrhagia.
- Ovarian cysts.

- *Menopause; hot flashes, night sweats* (cf. *Verbena hastata*, a botanical cousin).
- Heart palpitations, tachycardia.

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

The seeds yield a spicy preparation in alcohol. Dose of the tincture, 1–60 drops (John William Fyfe). Standard dose, 15–20 drops in water, 2x/day.

LITERATURE:

Traditional (3, 8), Matthew Becker (1, 2), Patricia Huenecke (1), Margi Flint (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 18, 20), Christopher Menzies-Trull (5, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20), William Holden (nineteenth-century homeopath, 12), Dan Kenner and Yves Requena (5, 8, 10, 15, 18, 21), David Hoffmann (20).

Vitis vinifera. Grape Vine.

Various parts of the grape have been used in European folk and professional medicine from an early time. Wine was a byword for the basic needs of life—bread and wine. It reigned supreme throughout the Mediterranean. The alchemists believed that the grape was the highest production of the vegetable kingdom, and that all plants aspired to be the grape. It provided the primal substance used to extract the essence of medicinal plants, distilled alcohol or "spirits of wine." All plants surrendered their essence of this "living water." Thus grape was able to reveal the essential or spiritual nature of the creation. Even today, wine is recognized to have powerful medicinal properties. Grapes contain grape sugar (glucose), gum, tannins, minerals (bitartrate of potash, sulphate of potash, tartrate of calcium, magnesia, alum, iron, chlorides of potassium and sodium), fruit acids (tartaric, citric, racemic, malic), and albumin.

"We owe to the grape more medicines than to any one simple whatsoever," wrote Sir John Hill (1740, 380). It is used in the form of wine, vinegar, tartar, grapes, grape leaves, grape vine, dried grapes (raisins), and other forms.

Among Mediterranean people wine is one of the fundamentals of life, along with water, wheat, and olive oil. It was used as a medicine from an early date. According to an old Talmudic saying, "Wine is the greatest of all medicines; where wine is lacking, drugs are necessary" (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:239). This is very much the approach we find among the Hippocratic and Galenic physicians. It was widely used by laypeople as a home remedy. A quaint example of a layperson recommending wine for the stomach occurs in Paul's letter to his disciple Timothy. In the Middle Ages herb wines were used to preserve and give herbal remedies. From the fourteenth century onward it was distilled, making a very good long-term preservative. Today we know that wine contains resveratrol, a substance believed to contribute to a healthy heart, popularly marketed as Pycnogenol®. One glass of red wine contains 160 mg. of resveratrol (David Hoffmann, 2003, 99).

The ancient Greek physicians used wine as one of their main remedies, by itself, diluted with water, vinegar, vinegar diluted with honey, or as a medium for giving herbs. The ancients universally held that wine was warming and thinning to the blood, therefore that it palliated headache, stomachache, and menstrual pain caused by congestion of blood. As a medicine, red wine is usually given, though there are exceptions.

The medieval authors continued to speak highly of it. Hildegard von Bingen (1994, 125) sings praises of all sorts of products of the vine. “Wine is the blood of the earth and is in the earth as blood is in human beings. It has a certain commonality with human blood.” Commenting on the fact that Noah was given the grapevine and the knowledge to make wine by God, Hildegard (1998, 132) writes: “Before the flood the earth was fragile, and it did not produce wine. When it had been moistened and strengthened by the flood, it produced wine. The earth now is to the earth before the flood as gravel is to the present earth.” In other words, it is now more dense. This visionary account is similar to that of a modern seer, Rudolf Steiner.

Moses Maimonides, the great Rabbi, wrote that it was a religious duty to rejoice, and therefore to drink wine appropriately. He recommended it as a medicine in full strength or diluted. “People suffering from a strong midline headache or the like, secondary to thick blood or internal coldness, are overly benefited by drinking undiluted wine.” He explains that it is warming and thinning. Wine diluted with an equal amount of water stimulates the body, warms the stomach, aids digestion, dissolves cold gases, warms the limbs, combats shivering, and thins, warms, and improves all the liquids of the body (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:239).

Hildegard (1998, 132) recommends wine as an external vulnerary. “If someone had ulcers on his body or has been struck with a wound, he should add a third part of olive oil to pure, good wine. He should gently heat this oily wine, when the ulcer or wound is large, when it shows blackness, or pus on the second or third day.

He should dip a linen cloth in it, and rub the ulcer or wound with it until the pus diminishes. If the wound or ulcer is small, he should dip a feather in the oily wine, when it is cold, not heated. He should gently clean the ulcer or wound with it until the pus diminishes."

SPIRITS OF WINE

The distillation process was invented in the late Middle Ages, making possible the concentration of the alcohol in the wine. This produced "spirits of wine," which was used to preserve herbs and medicine as tinctures and extracts. The alcohol does not deteriorate and, in sufficient amount (more than 20%), preserves vegetable contents. Spirits of wine was associated with the spirit or essence, because of its ability to extract and preserve the essence of the herb.

Spirits of wine concentrated to 80 proof (40% alcohol) is called brandy. As a medicine it is considered warming to the stomach and is sometimes taken warm with milk to sedate a nervous stomach or warm someone coming in from the cold. This is in line with the ancient uses of wine.

VINEGAR

Ordinary wine in the presence of air deteriorates into vinegar. This is a stable substance, like spirits of wine, which can be used to preserve herbs and medicines. The Greeks considered vinegar to be sour and cooling, and used it to bring out the cooling side of herbs.

Galen writes in his *Greater Art of Medicine*, "To find a rarefying medication that is truly completely cooling [in its effect] is something nearly impossible because vinegar, which is the most thinning of all known cooling medications that we use in therapeutics, contains some warmth and it exerts a drying [action]. Therefore, we mix into it a quantity of cold water to render it drinkable and we use it for any illness that requires cooling and moistening.

"Vinegar, in addition to fineness of its parts, has an expulsion force and a not insignificant hindrance effect. For this reason, physicians use it at the inception of cerebral illness, after having

mixed oil of roses therein." Vinegar of rose petal was a famous medicine for inflammation and fever. "If several days of the illness have already passed, mix some thyme together with the aforementioned two until they [not only] thin but warm because this medication weakens with time and its potency dissolves because of the sour substance therein." During the dispersive "stages of an abscess next to the brain, there is no better medication."

Galen also gives contraindications: "Vinegar produces damage in the womb and in other organs [richly endowed] with nerves because of its coolness, its thinness and its sinking into these [organs]" (above quotations from Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:318, 316).

OXYMEL

An essential food and remedy in Greek medicine was oxymel, or a mixture of vinegar and honey. Galen writes, "Oxymel is the most appropriate of sweet things used for a simple diet. In addition, it does not produce bad chymes, does not harm the stomach, and has nothing at all bad in it. It is also the strongest pulverizer [cutter] of all foods; and not only among foods but also among all medications." In other words, it cuts mucus in the stomach.

"We give oxymel to some patients to drink as a medication, not as a food."

"Oxymel that is only mildly acidic moistens the mouth and the palate, aids in the expectoration of sputum, alleviates thirst, opens the obstruction that occurs in the liver and spleen and cleanses them without harm. It also neutralizes biles that develop from the honey [in the oxymel], dissolves the bloating gases, stimulates urine flow by opening the closure, and facilitates the decent of superfluities and biles into the intestines without any harm whatsoever, in addition to which it expands the intestines [i.e., causes diarrhea], if constantly used."

"Indeed, the vinegar and honey drink is occasionally prepared with three parts of honey to one part of vinegar. A more pleasant mixture is one with seven parts of honey and one part of vinegar. It

should be cooked until [the ingredients are] well mixed and some of the foam should be removed therefrom."

There are adverse side effects. "Oxymel, if used excessively, produces diarrhea in the intestines, stimulates a cough and damages nerve organs" (above quotations from Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:317).

The Old English name for vinegar and honey drink is "switchel." Under this name it is still sometimes remembered in rural areas along the eastern seaboard. Switchel was used as a drink at harvesting time to cool off the workers. Sometimes ginger was added. Many people also considered it a general health tonic, to be consumed year-round. Later, when soda pop appeared, switchel was forgotten.

Dr. Jarvis, in his writings on Vermont folk medicine, brought the use of a daily drink of honey and vinegar back into modern attention. He commented that in the old days (before 1900) the store in his town sold more than fifty barrels of vinegar a year but now (1965) it sold fewer than ten.

Vinegar and other acids like lemon juice and whey are highly tart to the taste but their internal effect is alkalinizing and they antidote the ill-effects of the overly sweet and acidic diet we have today. (I myself try to take lemon every day. Vinegar does not agree with me as well. Concentrated whey is my favorite in taste, but does not help me as much as lemon.)

TARTAR

The tartar, or concretions formed in the bottoms of wine barrels, is used as medicine. The word comes from Tartarus, the Greek Hell (W. T. Fernie, 1914). Tartar is high in potassium salts and is beneficial for the kidneys. It was probably used on the principle of "like treats like" to rid the body of gravel. Grape tartar was a favorite remedy of Paracelsus.

BUDS

The different parts of the grapevine were used in herbal medicine, though the use of the buds is modern, coming from the school of "gemmotherapy." The buds have been used for treating scarlatina and preventing circulatory complications that result from it (cf. *Lycopus*). It also acts on circulatory problems in menopause, hemorrhage, and red blotches on the face (Kenner and Requena, 2001).

GRAPEVINE DRIPPINGS

This is a very ancient remedy for cataract, glaucoma, and corneal damage. Hildegard von Bingen recommended grapevine drippings. "Anyone with blurry vision and cloudy eyes should lubricate the eyelids often with the grape drops, which run out of the vine after cutting, and allow a little to run into the eye. This will clear the eyes without a doubt" (quoted by Strehlow and Gottfried, 1988, 8). The latter authors add that grapevine drippings can be combined with apple flower extract for this purpose. They also testify to its use in pinkeye. W. T. Fernie (1914) gives this same usage for vine drippings, and the combination of vine drippings and juice of the wild crab apple for bruises.

Hildegard also recommends grapevine drippings preserved in a bottle or used as an ointment for earache. Collect the drippings between early morning and noon, or they will spoil. To make a grapevine dripping eye or ear medicine collect the drippings in a bottle until it is nine-tenths full, then add one-tenth olive oil (Strehlow and Gottfried, 1988, 11).

GRAPEVINE ASH

Hildegard von Bingen recommended grapevine ash in warm wine as a tooth powder. Pulverize grapevine ash, add while still warm to a good wine, and brush the teeth regularly for gingivitis and teeth problems (Strehlow and Gottfried, 1988, 15). The latter authors remark that it shines the teeth and improves gum health. They recommend that the teeth be brushed with cold spring or well water

to harden them; soft water softens them. (Spring and well water is usually hard or alkaline.)

GRAPE

The fruit itself of the vine is rich in alkaline minerals, especially the sour wines (Chablis) grown on lime. These minerals precipitate out of solution as tartar in the wine cask, but plenty of alkalinity is transferred to the wine and vinegar, which are also alkalinizing. However, mineral content is highest in the grapes themselves, especially in the dark varieties. “They help greatly to decrease the acidity of the uric acid and to eliminate the acid from the system, thus immensely benefiting kidney function” (Harris, 1972, 105). A diet of seeded grapes alone has been used as an antidote to the formation of gravel and stones. Grapes make a good fever food since they supply blood sugar and are also restorative after much bleeding (W. T. Fernie, 1914).

GRAPE LEAF

Galen writes, “Among the things which most greatly benefit the stomach are those [qualitatively intermediate] between bitter and astringent such as blackberry leaves and vine leaves. All astringent things are beneficial to the stomach in most situations” (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, III:319).

“The tendrils and leaves of grape vine (from unsprayed vines), also fresh grape juice, have been used very effectively by Arabs as an internal and external cure for tumours” (Juliette de Bairacli Levy, 1973, 106), here denominating swellings, not cancer.

GRAPE SEED OIL

Even the grape seed yields a valuable culinary and medicinal oil. It is notable because it is very penetrating, carrying constituents in a salve or oil deeper into the tissues than other vegetable oils. It is not as penetrating as skunk oil (lard of the skunk).

RAISINS

“Raisins of the sun,” or dried grapes, are “in constant repute” for “coughs and soreness of the lungs, and in consumptions” or wasting, writes Sir John Hill (1740, 379). “Raisin-tea is found to be of the same protein value as milk, and much more easily digested, therefore of superior use in many cases of gastric disease where milk or soups (vegetable or animal) must be disallowed,” writes W. T. Fernie (1914, 222). “For persons who suffer from coldness of the feet and hands, it is very warming and cherishing.” Raisins are a normalizer for both diarrhea and constipation (Juliette de Bairacli Levy, 1973).

A folk remedy for arthritis is raisins soaked in gin, about nine a day for several months. The juniper in the gin may be the active ingredient.

THE GRAPE CURE

This idea appeared in the late nineteenth century in Europe. Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1973, 146) describes it most elegantly. “When the human body has become sick almost beyond reasonable hope of recovery, there is still, to my mind, one recourse: for the patient to retire to the neighborhood of some vineyard where grapes are cultivated by natural methods (that is without artificial fertilizers, chemical sprays, and heavy irrigation), and there to follow a grape cure, living only on the fruit of the vine (with a few vine leaves and tendrils eaten also) and drinking only pure water.”

CAUTIONS:

Grapes and wine are contraindicated in persons with sluggish digestion because they cause fermentation and acidity in the stomach (W. T. Fernie, 1914).

LITERATURE:

Traditional, Hippocrates, Galen, Hildegard von Bingen, Moses Maimonides, Paracelsus, John Hill, D. Jarvis, Ben Charles Harris, W. T. Fernie.

Zingiber officinale. Ginger.

Ginger is native to southeastern Asia, but is widely cultivated in tropical countries throughout the world. The rhizome is used in cooking and folk medicine. The pungent, sweet taste is due to the presence of two oleoresins, gingerol and shogaol, and volatile oils. Many of the traditional folk medical uses have been verified by modern pharmacology.

The warm, stimulating properties of the fresh rhizome suit it to cases where the organism or a part is cold, depressed, cramped up, or inactive. It is suited to people who feel chilly. A hot tea or soup with fresh ginger rhizome quickly opens the skin to release perspiration, chill, cold, and flu. It warms up the stomach to improve digestion, increases bile secretion, improves fat digestion and movement of food through the tract, reducing stagnation, irritation, and gas. It reduces nausea of motion sickness, pregnancy, and other causes.

A poultice of fresh ginger rhizome on the chest increases blood circulation, activates respiration, and begins to move the mucus out of the lungs. Thus it is used in pneumonia, like onion and mustard packs. In addition, of course, it stimulates diaphoresis.

Ginger has been shown to reduce platelet aggregation and thus thin the blood. This increases circulation and is cooling to the system. The rhizome, which looks like a hand with fingers, is used to reduce heat and stiffness in arthritis. As a stimulant and blood thinner it increases circulation to the part and moves fluids through the cartilage and joint, which lies beyond the reach of the capillary bed. The gingerols have been shown to reduce levels of leukotrienes

and prostaglandins that stimulate inflammation. Ginger oil is excellent as an external liniment on stiff, cold, spasmed muscles.

The fresh rhizome, used in cooking, tea, or even given in tincture (30 drops, once a day), contains enough oil to be nourishing. It regulates blood sugar levels and increases immune tone.

Herbalist Margi Flint comments, “Ginger is specific for labor and delivery. It connects the mother to the child in the womb. The rhizome looks like that little expected baby and expresses the warmth of mother love. Have everyone in the room drinking the tea. It unites them all in the spirit of the delivery. In long labors it keeps up the strength. Add a little honey or maple syrup to make blood sugar available.

“Ginger is better suited to the *kapha* constitution (large, damp, cold) than the *pitta* (hot) or *vata* (dry), because it is so warming and stimulating. If needed for people who are not cold use in small amounts.”

Ginger oil is a superlative antispasmodic for cramped muscles, especially in chronic cases that are aggravated, because it is warming and activating. It would be contraindicated in inflamed muscles. I have often used this for spasm in the back or neck. If the oil is unavailable, some other preparation may be used.

TASTE:

pungent, sweet • warm, moist • diffusive, stimulating

TISSUE STATES:

depression, constriction, atrophy

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS:

HEAD

- Headache, migraine, vertigo; especially associated with motion sickness.

RESPIRATION

- Incipient colds, postnasal drip, influenza (hot decoction of the fresh rhizome as a diaphoretic).
- Swollen glands in throat, sore throat.
- Stuck mucus in the chest, pneumonia, bronchitis (warm poultices).
- Dry, ticklish cough (tea).

DIGESTION

- Increases or decreases appetite.
- Lack of appetite, saliva, stomach acid (candied rhizome).
- Inactive gastrointestinal mucosa; with indigestion, fullness, catarrh, flatulence, colic, spasm, diarrhea, dysentery; sometimes associated with dietary indiscretion, tainted food, or chills (warm tea of the fresh rhizome; candied rhizomes; capsules).
- Flatulence caused by ingesta in a state of decomposition.
- Gastritis of alcoholics.
- Sluggish liver.
- Peptic ulcers.
- Digestive aid (a cup of the fresh rhizome tea in late afternoon before dinner).
- Nausea of food poisoning.
- Nausea of travel sickness and seasickness.
- Nausea of pregnancy; “Whoa, my world is moving, where’s the horizon?” (Margi Flint).
- Diarrhea of relaxed bowel, or colic, spasm.
- Intestinal fermentation and putrefaction; dysentery, cholera.

HEART AND CIRCULATION

- Poor peripheral circulation; coldness, stagnant blood; sticky platelets (warm tea, bath, fresh rhizome; bath of dried rhizome can cause irritation of sensitive tissue).
- Blood thinner; to wean off coumadin; 2 capsules daily of ginger plus 1 tablespoon of flaxseed oil; work with their doctor (William Mitchell).

FEMALE

- Warms up a cold uterus; relieves period cramps due to cold and stagnant blood (warm poultice of the fresh rhizome).
- Cramps that precede the period.
- *Specific for parturition, labor, and delivery: maintains strength and uterine contractions* (warm tea of the fresh rhizome; in prolonged labor add honey or maple syrup to provide immediate blood sugar).

MUSCULAR AND SKELETAL

- Cold extremities (foot bath or tea, fresh rhizome).
- *Sore, cramped muscles* (ginger oil or salve externally).

FEVER

- Fever and chills, achy, can't get warm enough.
- Mosquito bites (bath).

OTHER

- Drop in energy around three o'clock in the afternoon (warm tea).
- Immune deficiencies; people feel exhausted, low energy; it is gentle and nourishing (food or tea of fresh rhizome).
- Inflammation and pus in the eyes (infuse pulverized ginger root in wine overnight, apply externally).
- "Mistiness of the eyes" (take the above wine, 3 parts, add 1 part rue and 1 part hyssop, apply externally).
- Pimples (the above wine externally).

PREPARATION AND DOSAGE:

Ginger rhizomes can usually be purchased fresh at a food store and are considered entirely safe. The dried rhizomes are so hot they can burn sensitive tissues and are seldom used. For tea grate 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of the fresh rhizome and steep 10 minutes. The candied

rhizomes are used to warm the stomach. Average dose of the tincture of the fresh rhizome: 15–20 drops, children half that amount.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Not dangerous, but too warming for some people and conditions. Dried ginger used in a bath can cause severe irritation of sensitive tissue (vagina).

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When you do not know the nature of a malady,
leave it to nature; do not strive to hasten matters.
For either nature will bring about the cure or
it will itself reveal clearly what the malady really is.

—AVICENNA (1999, 468)

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